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# ARTICLES AND STUDIES



## CLOTH SEALS FROM THE ROMANIAN MEDIEVAL SPACE. CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING SOME ITEMS ALREADY DISCUSSED IN THE LITERATURE

MARCIANA HASAN<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The aim of this article is to debate some aspects regarding a number of cloth seals already published from 1950 to 1990. Those cloth seals were partially identified but some were not. Therefore, the idea of this article was to point toward a proper identification of these cloth seals. I also tried to discuss some aspects of the cloth commerce in the Carpathian Basin during the Middle Ages in connection with large commercial hubs, like Sibiu and Brasov, placed on the Southern border of the medieval kingdom of Hungary.

**Keywords:** Transylvania, cloth seals, cloth commerce, Vienna, Voivodes, Erfurt

**Rezumat:** Scopul articolului îl constituie dezbaterăa unor aspecte privind o serie de sigilii de postav publicate în perioada 1950–1990. Aceste sigilii de postav au fost parțial identificate, iar altele nu. Prin urmare, ideea articolului a fost de a obține o identificare corectă a sigiliilor de postav. Am încercat, de asemenea, să discut și unele aspecte ale comerțului de/cu postavuri din bazinul carpatic în perioada Evului Mediu în legătură cu marile centre comerciale, precum Sibiu și Brașov, amplasate la granița de sud a regatului medieval al Ungariei.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Transilvania, sigilii de postav, comerț cu postavuri, Viena, Voivozi, Erfurt

Through this study we want to point out the growing importance, duly noticed over the past few decades, of the seals appended to the bales of cloth that circulated between Western Europe and the present-day territory of Transylvania. These seals are the most palpable archaeological evidence of the textile trade in this part of the Kingdom of Hungary and its adjacent areas. They very explicitly reveal the places of origin of some cloths<sup>2</sup> that are otherwise unknown to us from the written sources. Archaeology provides thus, once again, the most relevant methodological approach to this far from negligible aspect of the long-distance trade carried out in the south-eastern area of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom.

In 1958, during archaeological excavations carried out in Suceava, in a local craftsman's workshop from the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century, there came to light seven „lead seals in a pit containing numerous crucibles that belonged to him.”<sup>3</sup> In 1979, Radu Popa also published a short article on medieval and post-medieval cloth seals identified in the Romanian space. He was followed by the Bătrâna spouses, who

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<sup>2</sup> On this topic, see Popa 1979, 275–278; Majewski 2017; Polczynski 2017; Elton 2017; for Hungary, in particular, Mordovin 2014; Mordovin 2013; Mordovin 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Vătășianu et alii 1960, 615.

identified a lead cloth seal in Curtea de Argeş, dated around 1426, coming from Tournai.<sup>4</sup> Next came the publication of excavations conducted in 1981 at Chioar fortress<sup>5</sup> (a cloth seal from around 1624?) and in Piua Petrii (Cetatea de Floci) (a lead cloth seal from the 16<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>6</sup> In 1988 Elena Busuioc discovered, in the shop of a merchant (whom she considered to be from Vâlcea), the premises of which had been destroyed around 1437 (datable thanks to the treasure trove of over 100 bronze *quartings* issued by Sigismund of Luxembourg), a whole cloth seal, among the burning remains in the cellar of that dwelling/shop.<sup>7</sup>

We will briefly analyse them, since, apart from the one identified by the Bătrâna spouses at Curtea de Argeş as belonging to a piece of cloth from Tournai (the famous *dornet* in the documents; see, for analogy, the figures below), dating from around 1426, the archaeologists were unable to make analogies for the rest of those cloth seals at that time. In this article, we shall attempt to provide those analogies:

a) The 7 cloth seals in Suceava come, in our opinion, from Jindhchuv Hradec (Neuhaus) (Bohemia), probably from Arnhem (the Netherlands), and Erfurt in present-day Thuringia, Germany.



**Figure no 1.** Cloth seal discovered in Suceava (1958) (left) and seal from the Kaposvár collection (right), both datable in 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, coming from Jindhchuv Hradec.



**Figure no 2.**  
The seal of Arnhem city  
in 1281.<sup>8</sup>

Because V. Vătăşianu et alii mentioned the fact that most of the seals discovered in Suceava in 1958 had the imprint of a double-headed eagle, I have associated them with the Dutch city of Arnhem, the only one that fit this heraldic description as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup> and that became an important centre of trade during the next period.

<sup>4</sup> Bătrâna, Bătrâna 1983, 196–211.

<sup>5</sup> Iosipescu et alii 1983, 483.

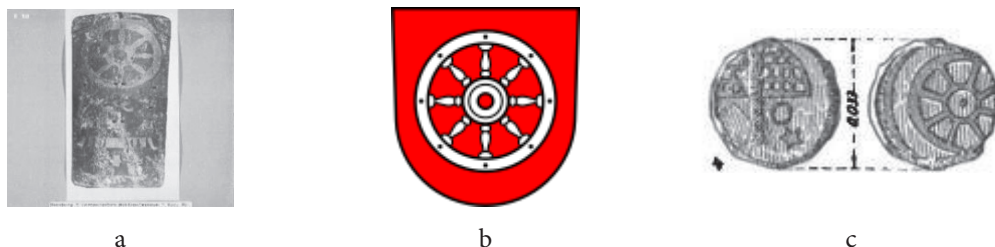
<sup>6</sup> Chiţescu et alii 1983, 488.

<sup>7</sup> Busuioc 1988, 140–141.

<sup>8</sup> The etymology of the word could come from the Germanic *arends-heim* = House of the Eagle.

<sup>9</sup> Kunkner 2007, 312–313.

The last model described by the authors of the discoveries from 1958 is that of an eight-spoke wheel, which is associated with Mainz and the archdiocesan centre there. However, on closer research, the only city that obstinately preserved the eight-spoke wheel in its heraldic inventory over time (the archdiocese eventually adopted the six-spoke one) was Erfurt, beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the city was a centre for the production of dyer's woad (from which the blue for dyeing textiles was obtained)<sup>10</sup> and thus it might be the case that the bales of dyed cloth came from here.



**Figure no 3.** The seal of Erfurt (a-b)<sup>11</sup> and the seal lead discovered in Suceava in 1958.

b) The discovery from 1979 from the point „Bisericuța“ (Little Church), at a distance of 4 km from the village of Voivozi<sup>12</sup> concerned a lead seal,<sup>13</sup> which was used to „legalize“ the bales of cloth that were shipped to this area. Radu Popa catalogued it, broadly, in a Western or Central European centre. He had dedicated to it, along with two other lead seals, a previous study: it had been identified in the northern part of the complex by Victor Eskenasy.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure no 4.** Cloth seal from the 14<sup>th</sup> century identified at Voivodes (according to Radu Popa).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Hill 2015, 44.

<sup>11</sup> <http://previous.bildindex.de/bilder/mi07991e11a.jpg> (15 April 2019). Shield with the heraldic insignia of Erfurt around 1350 found in the collections of the Nuremberg Museum.

<sup>12</sup> Popa et alii 1987, 61–106.

<sup>13</sup> Popa et alii 1987, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Popa 1979 footnote 4, 276.

<sup>15</sup> Popa 1979, 277.

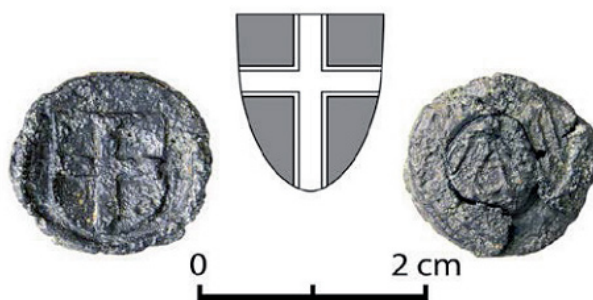
At that time, the author could not identify where the cloth seal inscribed with a Latin cross and a „W“ came from, due to the lack of thematic catalogues, even in the neighbouring countries (by this time archaeologists in Hungary and Poland had managed to create such databases).<sup>16</sup> Currently, based on analogies, we can state that it was the „Latin cross“ that allowed us to identify the city of origin as Vienna, and what Radu Popa had identified as „W“ was actually a stylized one-headed eagle.<sup>17</sup>

The archaeologist's mistake consisted in his erroneous perspective on the cloth seal identified north of the Romanesque hall church, dated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup> We shall not insist on the considerations the above-mentioned historian made on the complex. However, from our point of view, the architectural layout, specific to the Western environment, as well as the objects discovered there (an expensive, decorated glass tumbler<sup>19</sup> of urban, Germanic origin, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century, according to the archaeologist's own opinions, the aforementioned cloth seal from Vienna, the scissors, even the item of Byzantine luxury ceramics) suggest a Western monastic settlement that will have been decommissioned because of arson around 1437–1438.<sup>20</sup>

**Figure no 5.**

Cloth seal of Viennese origin from 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries (according to Maxim Mordovin).

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**Figure no 6.**

Viennese cloth seal from the 16th century discovered in the central square of the city of Pápa (according to Maxim Mordovin; notice the heraldic change, from the one-headed eagle to the shield that is parted per fess by a band).



If the dating of this seal stands (horizon of the 14<sup>th</sup> century), then it represents the earliest seal of Viennese origin about which we have data, in the entire Transylvanian area. Moreover, it represents the first information from outside the documentary sphere that certifies the trade of Viennese cloth in the monarchy's territories east of the Tisa.

<sup>16</sup> Popa 1979, 276.

<sup>17</sup> Mordovin 2014, Exhibition catalogue, position 66, 222.

<sup>18</sup> Popa et alii 1987, 79.

<sup>19</sup> Popa et alii 1987, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> For the dating of the fire, related perhaps to the Bobálna uprising of 1437–38, see Popa et alii 1987, 100.



The identification of this small artefact on the northern side of the complex indicates two aspects: 1. there certainly was a tailoring workshop operating in that place and 2. The entire bale of cloth ended up in the hands of a specialized tailor, a monk, who had to make some garments for himself or execute an order for a brother or a superior. The cloth and other textile products that were created in medieval workshops or in manufactories were not transported in big bales from which the required quantity could be cut, but were sold in so-called *vigs* (pieces) corresponding to the size of a particular type of clothing.<sup>21</sup>

Given that in 1406 the settlement, called *Almazeg* (was part of those *possessionibus Valachalibus*; trans. = Promontory / Hill / Land with Apple Trees), was part of the possessions of the fortress of Sólýomkő<sup>22</sup> (Piatra Șoimilor/Șoimi, Bihor County) and was donated to Voivode Iacob, son of Nicolae, son of Lack de Santău, and his brother, David, in exchange for the Nekche fortification (Baranya County), it must have existed before the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup>



**Map 1.** Viennese cloth: start and destination in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>21</sup> Popa 1979, 275.

<sup>22</sup> MOL DL 87746.

<sup>23</sup> See also the comments of Radu Popa from the study cited above.

Up until 1405–1406 the fortress had various owners. Between 1306 and 1318 it belonged to palatine Kopaszof the Borsa family, then it was a royal fortress (1318–1387) and a castellany pertaining to the comitatensis *honor* of Bihar county.<sup>24</sup> Among its castellans were the comites of Bihar: Dionysie Futaki (1322), Nicolae Perenyi (1342) and Egidiu Tornai (1367),<sup>25</sup> so three members of the court aristocracy from the Angevin period.

If we can correlate the Viennese cloth seal with the resumption of intense trade between the Austrians and the first Angevin after 1324, then we could further narrow its chronological time frame to the moment when Dionysie Futaki was comes of Bihar and castellan in Piatra Șoimilor (after 1322). The one for whom the *vig* of Viennese cloth, whose seal was discovered in Voivozi in 1976 must have been made, was probably one of the leaders of the monastic settlement, given that it was a medium-quality cloth, affordable for this ecclesiastical category.

c) As regards the cloth discovered by the Bătrâna spouses at Curtea de Argeș and dated by them to around 1426 on the basis of the town's seal changes,<sup>26</sup> we would date it in the wider range of 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries on the basis of analogies (no. 1, 4–5 and especially 6 from the catalogue compiled by Maxim Mordovin).<sup>27</sup>



**Figure no 7.** Tournai cloth seal discovered at Curtea de Argeș (left) and the same type, the László Konineks collection (right; Mordovin, no. 6) dated in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

d) As for the seal of cloth that Elena Busuioc identified in the town house in Vâlcea and attributed, on the basis of the quatrefoil in which it was inscribed, to a Czech area<sup>28</sup> (it cannot be a distinctive sign, see Tournai, for example), I cannot, for the time being, associate it with any renowned cloth production centre based on its description (an arrow firmly pointing to the right).

One final point should be made here: the presence, in the burned hoard of Vâlcea, which melted partially in the fire from the year of Sigismund's death (after 1437 – perhaps linked to the military campaigns of 1442–1443, 1447), only of the emperor's copper *quartings* (issued in 1427–37),<sup>29</sup> possibly of a silver denarius issued by the same emperor,

<sup>24</sup> Engel 1996, 414.

<sup>25</sup> Engel 1996, 414.

<sup>26</sup> Bătrâna, Bătrâna 1983, 202.

<sup>27</sup> Mordovin 2014, Exhibition catalogue, position 1, 4–6, 206–207.

<sup>28</sup> Busuioc 1988, 140.

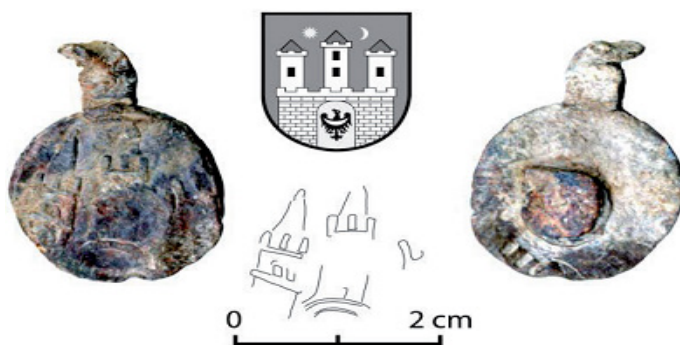
<sup>29</sup> Busuioc 1988, 141.

between 1430 and 1937,<sup>30</sup> and probably of a severely destroyed silver denarius issued by Charles Robert<sup>31</sup> (datable, in our opinion, to a coinage from after 1325) leads us to believe that this was the residence of a foreign merchant or even a craftsman (Czech, German, Hungarian) who had moved south of the Carpathians. The absence, in the hoard, of any coins issued by rulers from south of the Carpathians, the preference for „Hungarian currency“ (as the author said), the valorization by storage of the denarius type of coins of the Angevin kings, the presence of the cloth, probably of Central European origin, and of the seal or devotional ring made of silver, all these lead us to this objective conclusion.



**Figure no 7.1.** Silver denarius from Carol Robert, issued after 1325.

e) The cloth seal from Piuia Petrii, according to the description made by archaeologists, who mention the image of a viaduct, of a building in the background, and the presence of the same image with a golden eagle on the reverse side, entitled us to consider that it came from Chojnow (Haynau), in Bohemia, being dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the help of the coin issued by Ferdinand I which came from the burned area.



**Figure no 8.** Cloth seal from Chojnow (Mordovin catalogue: no. 35, p. 214; 16<sup>th</sup> century)

From the other studies dedicated to the area examined here it is clear that cloth trade was well developed, not least if we consider the cloths attested in the documents from the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, mentioned in charters from area outside the monarchy, towards the Danube and the Black Sea. All this, one way or another, also indicates the presence of tailoring workshops or of tailors in the area.

We can thus fill in some information about the „route of the cloth.“ For the western part of the monarchy of St. Stephen, there are three „transmission belts”: Pécs, Kaposvár, Pápa, and Turkevelies on the transportation route to the heart of the kingdom. These seals also indicate how the *vigs* of Viennese cloth travelled to the monastic complex (perhaps Benedictine?) from Voivozi and to other locations: through Pápa – Turkeve – Buda – Oradea, stopping after 460 kilometres on the estate in Voivozi. The others probably

<sup>30</sup> Busuioc 1988, 141.

<sup>31</sup> Busuioc 1988, 141.



travelled through Cluj to Braşov and, from there, for a further 400 kilometres. The one in Vâlcea may have got there via Sibiu.



**Map 2.** The provenance of the cloths whose seals are found in the collections of the National Museum of Hungary (cf. Maxim Mordovin).<sup>32</sup> The seals are from the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries and were identified at: Pápa, Kaposvár, Pécs and Turkeve. From west to east, the cities of origin are: London, Krommenie, Leiden, Tournai, Mechelen, Troyes, Cologne, Nuremberg, Mansfeld, Venice, Linz, Jindřichuv Hradec, Chojnów, Wschowa, Opava, Nový Jičín, Tulln, and Vienna.

The finds in Pápa are finally worth discussing because of the 140 lead seals discovered here, making this the first archaeological site of such size.<sup>33</sup> Buda, Győr and Eger were the largest cloth distribution centres in the kingdom, being followed, from an archaeological standpoint, by Visegrád, Szombathely, Pécs, Nové Zámky (Slovakia), Csábrág (Čábrad, Slovakia), Sempete (Šintava, Slovakia), Strečno (Strečno, Slovakia), Pér-Mindszentpuszta, Nagykanizsa, Bóly, Palotabozsok, Tamási, Szécsény, Illés (Ilava, Slovakia), which completes the picture in Pápa.<sup>34</sup> These distribution centres allow us to see how Transylvania was connected to the thriving cloth trade of the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries and how the fabrics or perhaps even some of the local, Transylvanian cloths, were distributed, together with other goods (including textiles) in the markets of Central and Western Hungary, via the same centres, such as Eger, Győr, Buda or Pápa. We are making this claim because this trade cannot have been just one-directional, from west to east, but must have had this reverse component, from Transylvania to the West.

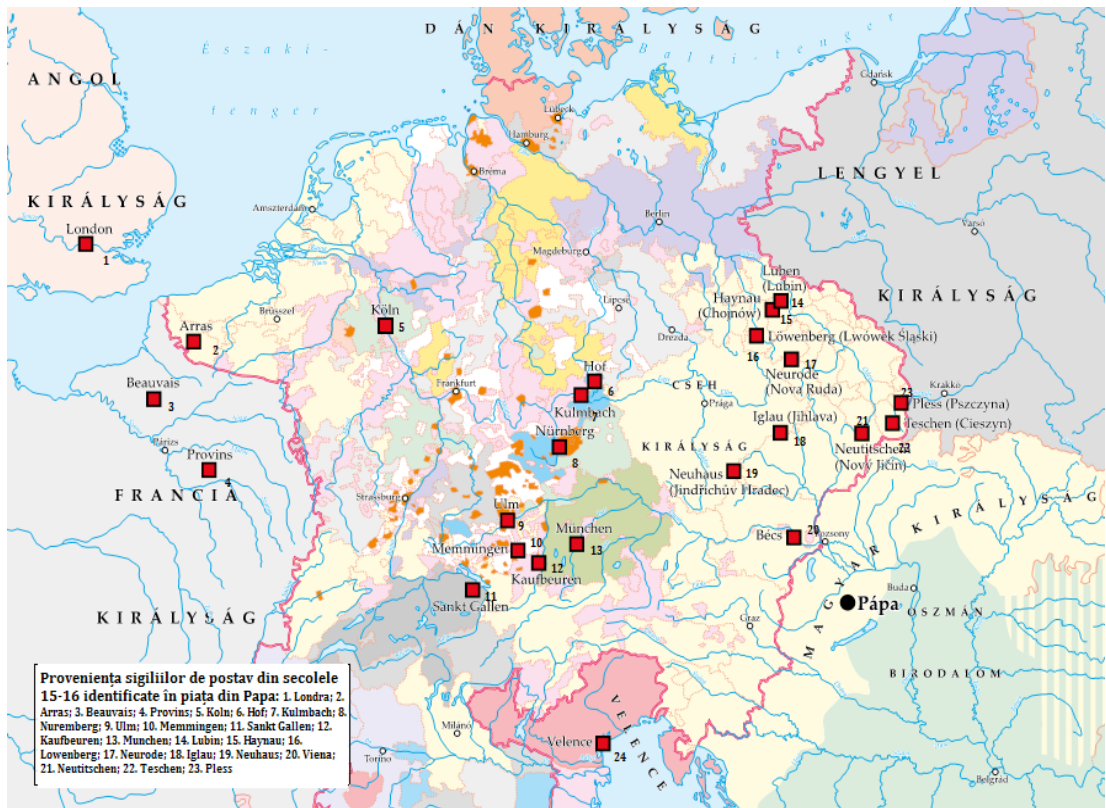
The cloth of Tournai (in Latin documents: *dornet*) and its seals were not identified in Pápa for the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as this type was the most commonly found in sites, but for the 14<sup>th</sup> century it was identified in Buda, Zolyom, Visegrád, Mezőfalva, and Palotabozsok.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Mordovin 2014, Figure no. 2, 199.

<sup>33</sup> Mordovin 2016, 48.

<sup>34</sup> Mordovin 2016, 48.

<sup>35</sup> Mordovin 2016, 48.



**Map 3.** The origin of the cloth seals from the 15th–16th centuries identified during archaeological excavations in the central square of the town of Pápa (according to M. Mordovin).<sup>36</sup> From there, some of the cloths were transported to Transylvania and then on to Wallachia, Moldova and even further.

No lead seals from Poperinge, Mechelen, Krommenie, Troyes or Leiden<sup>37</sup> have been identified in Pápa yet, but from the 15<sup>th</sup> century there are those from Southern Germany, from Nuremberg,<sup>38</sup> for example, which influenced even the heraldic coat of arms of Szeged.<sup>39</sup>

In Cluj, for example, there were two types of textiles from Nuremberg. After 1540 Nuremberg offered 73.67% of the most expensive quality cloths, only 4% of average quality cloths and in no case inferior cloths.<sup>40</sup> Nuremberg had become so dependent on trade with Hungary by the early 16<sup>th</sup> century that the collapse of Hungary caused it serious financial problems.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Mordovin 2016, 43.

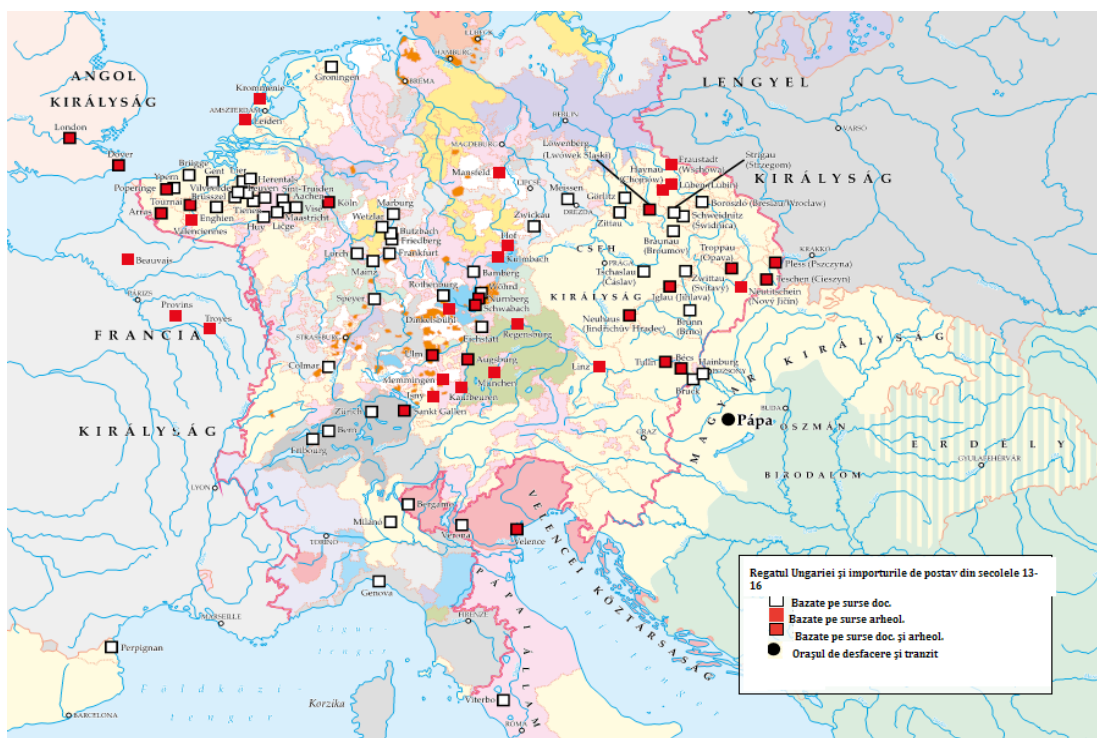
<sup>37</sup> Mordovin 2016, 49.

<sup>38</sup> Mordovin 2017, 48–50. Mordovin calls it the most famous textile material of Hungary from the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, detectable as far as Braşov and Sibiu.

<sup>39</sup> Mordovin 2017, 48–50.

<sup>40</sup> Mordovin 2017, 85.

<sup>41</sup> Mordovin 2017, 85.

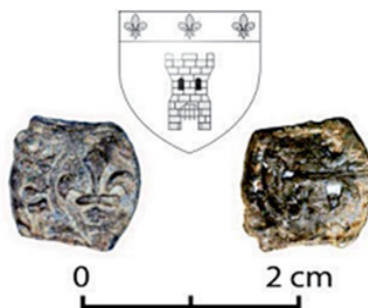


**Map 4.** The origin of the cloth seals from the 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries identified in the town of Pápa (according to M. Mordovin).<sup>42</sup> From here, via Buda or Eger, they reached Transylvania. The connection of Transylvania to the cloth market via these centres in Western Hungary is obvious.

**Figure no 9.**

Lead seal of the Tournai cloth: on the obverse there is a lily in a circle, accompanied by a very fragmented text: „[DE TOUR]NA[I]”<sup>43</sup>

The reverse depicts the town's heraldic shield: a tower with *fleurs-du-lis* in a pearled circle. It comes from Baranya County and is broadly dated in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>44</sup>



Transylvanian archaeology is yet to identify the lead seals of average-priced and inexpensive cloths. These must have arrived here if some, from this area, have also been identified in Moldova (see below). Not incidentally, classifications for the quality of cloths from Silesia: Haynau (Chojnów), Teschen (Cieszyn), Lwów/Lowenberg (Lwówek Śląski, Poland), and from Bohemia: Iglau (Jihlava), Neutitscheini (Nový Jičín), or for the cheaper ones coming from Neuhaus (Jindřichuv Hradec) have already been made.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Mordovin 2016, 43.

<sup>43</sup> This is probably where the Latin term *dornet* derives from (D..O..R..N...).

<sup>44</sup> Mordovin 2014, 207.

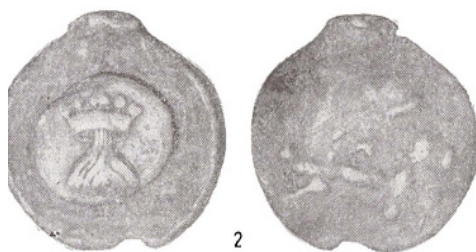
<sup>45</sup> Mordovin 2017, 50.



Slightly more expensive, of an average quality were the cloths of Vienna, Linz and Tulln, while the most expensive ones found in Pápa were made in the Serenissima's territories, which are also found elsewhere in the kingdom.<sup>46</sup> The Munich cloth, whose production exploded at this time in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, was found in very small quantities in Hungary, as was the Augsburg cloth, only two seals of which have been found here.<sup>47</sup> Hungarian archaeologists are still looking for explanations for this state of affairs, and the answers are not satisfactory yet. The cloth seals from Memmingen, Dinkelsbühl and Schwabach are well represented in the archaeological finds, unlike the „Hungarian“ local production: we know that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were centres in Kosice (Kassa/Kasovia), Bardejov, Presov, Cluj and Debrecen, which were connected to Braşov, Sibiu, and Sopron.<sup>48</sup>

We know that from the post-medieval period in Braşov we have only one seal identified in Hălmeag (Arad County),<sup>49</sup> datable to the 16<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup>:

These seals are still waiting for their discoverers to complete, hopefully, the map of medieval cloth trade in Hungary and Transylvania in the 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries.



**Figure no 10.**  
Lead seal of the Braşov cloth.

### Bibliography

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## WATERCOLOUR PORTRAITS OF THE TRANSYLVANIA'S PRINCES

CLAUDIA M. BONȚA<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This paper presents a series of portraits of the Transylvanian princes, along with a brief description of the political circumstances of the period 1541–1691, when Transylvania was a Principality. The watercolours presented here are extracted from the volume *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens*, which was published in 1729 and was based on a series of watercolours painted by an artist from Gratz in 1692.

**Keywords:** 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, portrait, watercolour, Transylvania's princes

**Rezumat:** Lucrarea prezintă o serie de portrete ale principilor Transilvaniei, alături de o succintă descriere a conjuncturii politice a epocii principatului Transilvaniei, 1541–1691. Acuarelele prezentate fac parte din volumul *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens* apărut în anul 1729, realizate după acuarele ale unui artist din Gratz, din anul 1692.

**Cuvinte cheie:** secolele XVI–XVIII, portret, acuarelă, principii Transilvaniei.

Various European political circumstances meant that, for 150 years, Transylvania, caught between two great powers, could enjoy a much-coveted status of relative independence. A dramatic course of events, the military collapse of Hungary at Mohács in 1526, and the transformation of part of its territory into an Ottoman province in 1541, as well as the power struggles between various political factions converged to create a small buffer state between the great powers: the Principality of Transylvania. The creation and evolution of the Transylvanian state unfolded under the sign of its special geopolitical position, as it represented an area of interest between the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires. Awareness of the potential benefits of this situation, in which the state was created under external pressure, and of the fact that its autonomy, established in 1541, was dependent on fluctuations of the authority of the two empires, led to adjustments in Transylvanian politics, which took advantage of the rivalry between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs in the fight against the expansionist tendencies of both imperial powers. Officially dependent on the Ottomans, the Principality of Transylvania enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in important matters. The princes were chosen by the Diet and confirmed by the Ottomans, whose authority they recognized (also) by paying them a tribute. Ottoman support proved decisive in supporting some candidates for the throne, through military intervention sometimes. The Austrian imperial power relentlessly attempted to extend its rule over the Principality, repeatedly succeeding to take control of it, thanks to the recklessness of some princes, especially during the Turks' moments of weakness. Geopolitical advantages

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could often turn into inconveniences, the Transylvanians being invaded by troops of Turks, Tatars, Imperials, Cossacks, or mercenaries, under whose discretionary authority they were forced to live their lives. The era of the Principality was to end when the Imperial troops entered Transylvania at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Leopoldine Charter of 4 December 1691 was the document that enshrined the Habsburg domination in Transylvania. This was confirmed by the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), under which Transylvania became a province of the Habsburg Empire and the title of Prince was taken over by the emperors from the House of Habsburg.<sup>2</sup>

The complicated historical context, the unstable political situation, the fickle military alliances, and the profound religious transformations, all these elements framed the period of the Principality as a precarious time, full of dramatic confrontations and bloody wars, accompanied by a whole series of misfortunes: shortages, famine, epidemics, looting, depopulation. The strategic location of the Principality meant that the state was almost permanently the target of military offensives, whether Ottoman or Imperial, with frequent changes in the balance of power and intense efforts to resolve the conflicts. The vulnerable position between the Turks and the Habsburgs determined a sinuous policy of changing alliances, in which Transylvania tried to maintain its autonomous status by using the rivalry between the two great powers to its own advantage. This status generated an avalanche of events, a dramatic evolution in which progress and stability intertwined with unrest and power struggles between rival factions, short and repeated reigns, and bloody disputes between ambitious families who wanted to create their own dynasty. In this short period of time, Transylvania was ruled by over thirty princes, governors or regents, some of them with several distinct governances from 1541 to 1691. Such an abundance of leaders makes it difficult to understand the age and its history, most of these figures being only vaguely familiar to the general public. Portraiture, as a more or less official art form, partially closes this gap by presenting a series of long-forgotten princes. Through painting, graphics and phaleristics we can find out what these princes looked like: disparate pieces, in collections and museums around the world, remind us of the image of these rulers.

One of the works that grouped together many of the portraits of these princes was designed at a time that was relatively close to the Principality era, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Published under the title *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens*, in 1729, the work was inspired by a series of watercolours made in 1692 by an artist from Gratz, and presents more than 100 portraits of some of that epoch's characters, dressed in specific Transylvanian costumes.<sup>3</sup> Among them can be distinguished a group of rulers of Transylvania. The interesting concept generated an original work, a true mosaic of portraits in which generic characters belonging to various human typologies display the characteristic attire of each social or ethnic category, at a time when social and political status was expressed through clothing. They pertain to social categories and national categories. They can be ordinary people, such as peasants, shepherds, servants, merchants and townspeople, or members of the elites, such as mayors, patricians, nobles and princes. In addition to the generic portraits,

<sup>2</sup> Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 544–646; Köpeczi et alii, I, II 2002; Pop, Bolovan 2013, 85–90; Lendvai 2013, 104–155; Felezeu 1996; *Istoria României*, II 1962, 630–640; Dörner 2006, 11–18.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/tel4/search?collection-id=a1033&query=Trachten-Kabinett%20von%20Siebenb%C3%BCrgens#/> (18 January 2019).

there are also individualized portraits of personalities of that era, including portraits of some of Transylvania's princes. As for the princes, the watercolours were probably made after the original portraits of the characters, with a relatively high degree of accuracy in terms of their physical appearance. The work amounts to a fresco of the Transylvanian Principality's era, with painstakingly depicted characters. In its entirety, the volume reflects the diversity and uniqueness of Transylvania. Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei in Cluj-Napoca has in its patrimony no less than sixteen watercolours from this series, representing the portraits of some of the Princes of Transylvania.

#### **JOHANNES I 1538–1540, watercolour (Figure no. 1)<sup>4</sup>**

The series of portraits begins with John Zápolya<sup>5</sup> (1487–1540), the first leader of Transylvania after the Battle of Mohács, before the era of the Principality. On a simple plateau, with verdure in the background, the portrait of Zápolya is outlined, in a three-quarter view, with his left hand placed martially on his hip. The tone of the image alludes to his proclamation as King of Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Wearing a crown on his head and a sceptre, Zápolya appears bearded, with untrimmed, dishevelled hair, exuding an air that borders on the wild. He is dressed in a long, golden caftan, embroidered with blue and green threads, a caftan that is fastened, at the top, with small, decorative buttons, while in the lower part it is simply wrapped and secured with a wide, turquoise blue girdle. On his shoulders he is wearing a long red cloak, lined with fur, and has knee-high red boots with raised toe tips. Bearded and unkempt, he is gazing martially forward, with staring eyes, ostentatiously holding the sceptre in his right hand. The almond-shaped eyes, the lips tightened in a sly smile, the targeted gaze, all these are details also found in an engraving signed by Erhard Schön (1491–1452),<sup>7</sup> thus confirming the veracity of this portrait. Leader of the noble party, ambitious and merciless, Zápolya stood out as a man who was capable of anything and who cruelly crushed the great peasant uprising of 1514 led by George Dózsa.<sup>8</sup> A Voivode of Transylvania, he took advantage of the period of anarchy after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, disputing the throne with Ferdinand I of Habsburg and benefiting from the support of an intact Transylvanian army, which had not arrived in time to fight at Mohács. Rich, crafty and unscrupulous, Zápolya used the troubled times the country was going through and the infighting between various factions to gain power. Duplicitously, he resorted to all possible means to achieve his goals, whether it was violence, intrigue or negotiations. In 1529 he recognized Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent as his sovereign and swore allegiance to him, thus becoming a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. He managed to reach a compromise with his Habsburg rival by signing a secret succession treaty in Oradea in 1538, a peace agreement that granted Zápolya a lifetime rule. In exchange, his designated heir was to

<sup>4</sup> *JOHANNES I 1538–1540*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5801. Size: width = 35.5 cm; length = 22.9 cm.

<sup>5</sup> Romanian: Ioan Zápolya, Hungarian: Zápolya János.

<sup>6</sup> On 14 October 1526, the Tokaj Diet elected John Zápolya King, but on 17 December the Bratislava Diet proclaimed Ferdinand I of Habsburg King of Hungary. Hungary had two kings, and this led to a civil war between camps that were always changing, as well as to repeated external interventions, both from the Porte and from the Imperials or the rulers of Moldova and Wallachia. See Soporan 2003, 79–86.

<sup>7</sup> [http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%A9p:Szapolyai\\_J%C3%A1nos\\_fametszet.jpg/](http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%A9p:Szapolyai_J%C3%A1nos_fametszet.jpg/) (13 September 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Romanian: Gheorghe Doja, Hungarian: Dózsa György.

be Ferdinand I of Habsburg. His proverbial cunning nature prevailed and he managed to spectacularly turn the situation in his favour by marrying the young Isabella of Jagiello, who gave him a son,<sup>9</sup> in July 1540. A few days later, Zápolya died, leaving behind a direct heir who excluded Ferdinand I from the succession.<sup>10</sup>

### STEPHANUS BÁTHORI 1571–1576, watercolour (Figure no. 2)<sup>11</sup>

With his body twisted three quarters towards the viewer, his head in side view, Stephen Báthory<sup>12</sup> (1533–1586) is wearing on his head a crown that matches a long blue cloak, lined with fur. He is dressed in armour and holds the sceptre ostentatiously in his right hand, resting the left on his sword. Properly trimmed, with a neat moustache and a goatee, the prince exudes an imposing air, in keeping with his rank and parade outfit. A similar physiognomy is confirmed by a series of portraits of the prince, one of the best known being that attributed to Martin Kober, *STEPHANVS I/ REX POLONIE /ANNO/ 1586*.<sup>13</sup> *The most enlightened and progressive Hungarian statesman from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century*,<sup>14</sup> he had studied at the University of Padua, where he received a humanist education. After the death without issue of Prince John Sigismund Zápolya, Stephen Báthory was elected Prince of Transylvania. A member of the richest family of those times east of the Tisa, he was propelled to the princely throne and then became elected King of Poland, by his marriage to Anna Jagiello in 1576. Strongly influenced by the Jesuits, he founded, with their support, the University of Vilnius (1578) and the University of Cluj (1581). He waged a policy of equipoise, in which his desire to banish the Ottomans and restore the glory of the Hungarian Kingdom was subordinated to political lucidity. He did not venture into military action but sought to first create favourable circumstances. However, he died before he succeeded in doing so. The disappearance of the Transylvanian aristocratic magnates, the extinction of the Drágffy and Várday families, and the reconciliation of the two branches of the Báthory family were the elements that led to Stephen Báthory not having strong rivals. In the process of governance, he relied on his family. After leaving for Poland, he continued to govern Transylvania from a distance. He left his brother, Christopher Báthory, at the helm of the country and appointed the latter's son, Sigismund Báthory<sup>15</sup> as his heir.<sup>16</sup>

### CHRISTOPHORUS BÁTHORI 1576–1581, watercolour (Figure no. 3)<sup>17</sup>

On a plateau framed by verdure, Christopher Báthory<sup>18</sup> (1530–1581) appears with a sword belted at his waist, his head uncovered, holding a fur cap under his arm. He is wearing

<sup>9</sup> John Sigismund Zápolya (Romanian: Ioan Sigismund Zápolya, Hungarian: Zápolya János Zsigmond), 1540–1571, considered the first Prince of Transylvania.

<sup>10</sup> Felezeu 1996, 72–75; Lendvai 2013, 104–123; Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002; Zöllner 1997, 231–234.

<sup>11</sup> *STEPHANUS BÁTHORI 1571–1576*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5802. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>12</sup> Romanian: Ștefan Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory István.

<sup>13</sup> Martin (Marcin) Kober, cca. 1550–ante 1598, Polish portrait artist, court painter of Stephen Báthory, <http://51.254.200.38/zbiorywawel/node/4453/> (13 September 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Romanian: Sigismund Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory Zsigmond.

<sup>16</sup> Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002; Pop 2004, 281–282; Felezeu 1996, 84–87.

<sup>17</sup> *CHRISTOPHORUS BÁTHORI 1576–1581*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5803. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>18</sup> Romanian: Cristofor Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory Kristóf.

a salmon-coloured suit, fastened with tiny buttons at the top, simply wrapped below and fastened with a wide green girdle. A whiff of wind allows the green lining of the suit to be seen. The character is covered in a long green cloak, lined with fur and embroidered with dark green plant motifs; at the top the cloak is adorned with five wide girdles with golden flares. Báthory has golden boots on his feet, with the tip twisted upwards. Completely grizzled, with trimmed white hair and beard, the prince exudes an air of distinction, but he seems exhausted, fatigued. The same distinguished air is noticeable in his medal portrait of 1580<sup>19</sup> or in the engraving *Cristophorus Bathor de Somlyo*.<sup>20</sup> A voivode and deputy of Stephen Báthory since 1576, Christopher Báthory ruled with some degree of autonomy in domestic politics, but the three members of the Governing Council (the maternal uncle of Sigismund Báthory, Stephen Bocskai, and two of his more distant relatives, Dénes Csáky and László Sombori) had to carry out the orders of the Transylvanian chancellery in Cracow, foreign relations being the exclusive preserve of King Stephen Báthory.<sup>21</sup>

#### ANDREAS BÁTHORI 1599–1601, watercolour (Figure no. 4)<sup>22</sup>

The portrait features a bizarre character, dressed in a short red cloak, long white priestly garb and black boots. From under the cardinal's red cloak, with an ermine collar, a large crucifix stands out, a cross with four equal sides. The character's physiognomy is a combined one, with characteristics of both a layman and a cleric, with trimmed bangs, with tresses and with a long, twisted nobleman's moustache. A strange character, neither a prelate, nor a prince, a peculiar product of the two worlds. On 21 March 1599, Sigismund Báthory renounced the throne of the Principality of Transylvania and, on 29 March 1599, the Transylvanian Diet of Mediaș elected his cousin, Cardinal Andrew Báthory<sup>23</sup> (1563–1599), as prince. The latter was close to Polish politics, having spent his youth at the court in Cracow, where his uncle, Stephen Báthory, had been King of Poland and Lithuania since December 1575. However, the pro-Polish political orientation of the new prince meant a radical change of Transylvania's foreign policy and the abandonment of an offensive anti-Ottoman policy. This prompted the reaction of Voivode Michael the Brave<sup>24</sup> who was forced to break through the circle of the pro-Ottoman camp in which he was trapped and to seek a direct path to his ally in the Holy League, the Habsburg Empire. With the help of the Szeklers, Michael the Brave defeated Andrew Báthory at the Battle of Șelimbăr, on 28 October 1599. After the battle, the cardinal ran off, trying to find refuge in Poland, but a few days later, he was captured by the Szeklers and killed on 3 November 1599. Therefore, the dates on the watercolour referring to the reign of the cardinal, 1599–1601, are inaccurate.

<sup>19</sup> Medal dated in 1580, Collections of MNIT, N 72928, common metal, d=45.5 cm. Obv.: semi-circular CHRIST·BATH·DE·SOMLIO·. In the field: front portrait of Christopher Báthory with furry cloak over an embroidered coat fastened with small, round buttons. Rev.: semi-circular PRINCEPS TRANSYLV\*1580\*. In the field: the shield of the Báthory family (three wolf tusks) surmounted by the langued eagle, flanked by the sun and the moon. Below are seven fortresses on seven mountain peaks, arranged in a semi-circular manner. See Călian 2013, 66, pl. I/1.

<sup>20</sup> <http://mek.niif.hu/05600/05626/html/> (11 September 2019).

<sup>21</sup> Sălăgean 2006, 19–29; Köpeczi et alii I 2002; Felezeu 1996, 84–87.

<sup>22</sup> ANDREAS BÁTHORI 1599–1601, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5804. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>23</sup> Romanian: Andrei Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory András.

<sup>24</sup> Romanian: Mihai Viteazul, Hungarian: Vitéz Mihály.



Andrew Báthory's reign lasted several months, from spring to autumn 1599, when his death occurred. From the end of 1599 to 1601, Transylvania was a witness to a series of galloping events, with short and intensely disputed periods of governance, such as those of Michael the Brave (which began after the Battle of Șelimbăr, from 28 October 1599, and lasted until the Battle of Mirăslău, on 18 September 1600), George Basta (Imperial troops had control over Transylvania in the period of July 1600 and February 1601), Sigismund Báthory (who claimed the throne of the Principality in February 1601, and lost it in the Battle of Guruslău, on 3 August 1601), General Basta (who regained control of the Principality after July 1601). The troubled and volatile period continued with the reigns of Sigismund Báthory (who claimed back the throne of the Principality and abdicated for good in 1602, after the defeat suffered in front of Basta in Teiuș), Moses Székely<sup>25</sup> (proclaimed prince with the Ottomans' support in the spring of 1603 and killed in the Battle of Brașov against the ruler of Wallachia, Radu Șerban, on 17 July 1603) and, again, General Basta, Governor of Transylvania on behalf of the emperor. Transformed into a theatre of war, the country would experience one of the darkest periods in its history. The devastation caused by war, famine, chaos and, in particular, the looting and atrocities committed by the out-of-control mercenary troops brought the country to the brink of collapse.<sup>26</sup>

#### GEORGIUS BASTA. 1603–1605, watercolour (Figure no. 5)<sup>27</sup>

Portrait of General Georgio Basta<sup>28</sup> (1544–1607), Imperial Governor of Transylvania between 1603–1605, in epoch garments, posing with an arrogant, conquistador attitude, on a terrace framed by vegetation. The general is covered in armour down to his knees, wearing a discreet white collar, black shoes with red heels, white stockings and an embroidered cloak. Under his arm, he is holding a black cap with short plumage, after the Renaissance fashion. He is clutching a document firmly in his right hand and is resting his left hand on the long sword at his waist. The haughty figure with a sharp chin is found in his most famous portrait, *GEORGIVS BASTA DNS. IN SVLT. EQVES AVRAT. SAC. CÆS. MALT<sup>is</sup> AC CATHOLICI REGIS HISPANLÆ CONSIL: BELLICVS NEC NON PARTIVM REGNI HVNG. SVPERIORIS GENERAL PROCAPITAN.*, *SCM Pictor, Ioan ab Ach pinx.*, an engraving by Dominicus Custos (cca. 1560–1615) after Hans von Aachen (1552–1615),<sup>29</sup> published in Augsburg under the title *Atrium Heroicum*...<sup>30</sup> General Basta fought at the head of the Imperial troops in the anti-Ottoman war called the *Long War* or the *Fifteen-Year War* (1591–1606) and ruled Transylvania as an imperial vassal. Ruthless and completely unscrupulous, he instigated an odious governance based on systematic looting.<sup>31</sup> Remembered as one

<sup>25</sup> Romanian: Moise Secuiul, Hungarian: Székely Mózes.

<sup>26</sup> Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002, P. P. Panaitescu 2002, 44–51, 67–77, 82–87.

<sup>27</sup> *GEORGIUS BASTA. 1603–1605*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5805. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>28</sup> Romanian: Gheorghe Basta, Hungarian: Basta György.

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3712\\_869&partId=1&people=138246&peoA=138246-2-23&page=1/](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3712_869&partId=1&people=138246&peoA=138246-2-23&page=1/) (5 September 2019); <http://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/131356/> (5 September 2019).

<sup>30</sup> *Atrium Heroicum Caesarum, regum aliarumque summatum ac procerum qui intra proximum speculum vivere, aut hodie supersunt*, a work published by the Flemish Dominicus Custos, between 1602 and 1604, is a collection of 171 engraved portraits of the most influential figures of the time. See <https://publicdomainreview.org/collections/engravings-by-dominicus-custos/> (5 September 2019).

<sup>31</sup> Felezeu 1996, 91–93.

of the most nefarious characters in the history of Transylvania, the imperial general had control over the country in several periods of time between 1600 and 1605. In the troubled climate from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, after many twists and turns in his attempts to assert himself, Basta became Governor of Transylvania in 1603, in the service of Emperor Rudolph II, under the supervision of imperial commissioners. He maintained that position until 1605, when the imperial troops were forced out by Stephen Bocskai. His government was to remain entrenched in the collective memory as a harsh period for Transylvania. *An occupied, impoverished country, where mercenary troops laid down the law – looting, murdering, an apocalyptic atmosphere*,<sup>32</sup> in which Basta ruled Transylvania with an iron hand and established an abusive regime, a real reign of terror.<sup>33</sup> Through violence, forced conversions and the dispossession of assets of those accused of high treason, Emperor Rudolf II tried to force the re-Catholicization of Transylvania, which had become largely Protestant. Mercenary troops recruited mostly among Walloons, Italians and Spaniards were a real calamity for the population. Moreover, the period of 1600–1605 is described as an age of political and military unrest, religious persecution, insecurity, frightening squalor and general despair.<sup>34</sup> The imperial military occupation and the punitive measures adopted led to the erosion of the pro-Habsburg attitude and determined the struggle for breaking away from the imperial sphere of influence, which had proved even more nefarious than the Ottoman one.<sup>35</sup>

#### STEPHANUS BOSKAI. 1605–1607, watercolour (Figure no. 6)<sup>36</sup>

Portrait of Stephen Bocskai<sup>37</sup> (1557–1606), Prince of Transylvania in 1605–1606, dressed in epoch garments. Located on a terrace framed by vegetation, with a faded hilly background, the prince is wearing red knee-high boots with spurs, a salmon-coloured cloak embroidered with golden flares, lined with fur, a coat of the same colour with a blue girdle and a black fur cap with decorative plumage fastened with a brooch with gems, after the fashion of the time. In his right hand, he is holding his sword, drawn out of its scabbard, and leaning it, relaxed, against his shoulder.<sup>38</sup> The two (almost identical) engravings rendering Bocskai's portrait, signed by Balthasar Caymox, 1591–1613 (*SPECTABILI AC MAGNIFICO. DOMINO DNO STEPHANO BOCHKAY DE KISMARIA. COMITI COMITATVS BIHARIENSIS, etc.*) and, respectively, Crispin de Passe, 1605 (*STEPHANVS BOCHKAY DE KIS/MARIA, PRINCEPS TRANSSYLVA/NIAE, PARTIVM REGNI HVNGARIAE DOMI/NVS, ET SICVLORVM COMES. ANNO MDCV*),<sup>39</sup> show a relatively different physiognomy from the one depicted in this watercolour: an aging,

<sup>32</sup> Dörner 2006, 11–18.

<sup>33</sup> Sălăgean 2006, 19–29.

<sup>34</sup> Lendvai 2013, 116–123; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Köpeczi et alii, I, 2002; Bérenger 2000, 199–201; Vehse, I 1856, 257–260.

<sup>35</sup> Szegedi 2006, 85–90.

<sup>36</sup> *STEPHANUS BOSKAI. 1605–1607*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5806. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>37</sup> Romanian: Ștefan Bocskai, Hungarian: Bocskai István.

<sup>38</sup> The same kind of pose, with the sword leaning against the shoulder, is found in an engraving signed by Crispin de Passe, 1605.

<sup>39</sup> <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.202785/> (6 September 2019).



bulky individual, but with a more intense look and very expressive eyes. An important character for the history of Transylvania for a long period of time, Bocskai was the one who ended the fifteen-year war. Former adviser to the indecisive Sigismund Báthory, a partisan of anti-Ottoman policy, he acknowledged that the actions of the imperials, based on forced re-Catholicization, corruption, economic and military disorder, had resulted solely in poverty, famine and suffering in Transylvania. He retired, disappointed, from public life, but was forced to return to the political scene because of the pressures the imperials exerted over his wealth and life. The loss of the autonomy of Transylvania, the attacks on Protestantism, and the abuses of the Habsburgs unleashed an uprising under the leadership of Stephen Bocskai, a former supporter of Emperor Rudolf II, an exceptional military talent who organised, in the midst of the chaos, an army of bold warriors, the *hajduks*. Received with scepticism at first, Bocskai managed to arouse general enthusiasm through his actions, which led to the restoration of constitutional and religious rights and privileges. He promised to restore the old freedoms of the Szeklers and managed to master the troops of *hajduks*, whom he ennobled as a group and settled in the Partium region. *The merciless Counter-Reformation of the Habsburgs*<sup>40</sup> rallied the Lutheran Germans, not just the Calvinist Hungarians. Bocskai was at the forefront of the battle against the imperials, having managed to liberate Transylvania from their nefarious occupation, winning crushing victories together with Turkish and Tatar units. He was elected prince by the Congregation of Miercurea Nirajului on 21 February 1605, respectively by the Diet of Mediaș on 14 September 1605, being confirmed by the Ottomans on 19 October / 19 November 1604 under the official decree (*ahd-nâme*), respectively under the decree of 11 November 1605 (*berat*) which appointed him as Prince of Transylvania and King of Ottoman Hungary (a dignity he refused). He pacified the country, ended the disturbances and military interventions of the imperials, withdrew the *hajduks* and ensured the free practice of religion for the Protestants under the Treaty of Vienna of 23 June 1606, which enshrined the state autonomy of Transylvania and the freedom of Protestant denominations. Under the Treaty of Vienna, the imperialists recognized him for life as Prince of Transylvania and master of the Satu Mare and Tokaj fortresses and of the Bereg and Ugocsa counties, in a territorially enlarged Principality of Transylvania. A feared and respected warrior, a gifted diplomat, Stephen Bocskai mediated the signing of the Zsitvatorok Treaty between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans on 15 November 1606. The treaty put an end to the war begun in 1591 and re-established the *status quo* between the two empires (a situation that would persist, being successively renewed until 1663). Transylvania remained an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Porte. However, the prince died, having probably been poisoned, a few weeks later, in Cașovia, on 28/29 December 1606, at the age of 49. Stephen Bocskai was one of the greatest princes of Transylvania, his death marking the return of political instability in the Principality.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Lendvai 2013, 121–123.

<sup>41</sup> Lendvai 2013, 116–123; Bérenger 2000, 202–205; Köpeczi et alii, I 2002; Andea 2004, 318–319; Dörner 2006, 11–18; Lupescu Makó 2006, 38–62; Encyclopædia Britannica, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911\\_Encyclop%C3%A6dia\\_Britannica/Bocskay,\\_Stephen/](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Bocskay,_Stephen/) (18 January 2019); Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Szegedi 2006, 85–90; Călian 2006, 118–130.

**SIGISMUNDUS RÁKOCZI. 1607–1608, watercolour (Figure no. 7)<sup>42</sup>**

On a terrace framed by vegetation, the portrait of Sigismund Rákóczi<sup>43</sup> (1544–1608), Prince of Transylvania in 1607–1608, in epoch garments. The prince is wearing yellow boots with an elongated, raised top, a long green caftan with a red girdle and a yellow cloak lined with ermine fur; on his head, placed in a slanted position, he has a cloth beret with a fur border and plumage. He is posing with his mace in his right hand and his left hand on his hip, above the sword that can be seen at the belt. The picture accurately reflects the portrait of the prince *SIGIS: RAKOTZI/ ab etn 1607. 9. Feb. Etn. 1608. 3.Mar. PRIN TRAN.*<sup>44</sup> However, the physiognomy depicted in this watercolour is more expressive and neatly executed. His election as prince was due to the ambition of the nobility in Transylvania to prove the fact that the Prince of Transylvania was to be elected by the Diet and not appointed by his predecessor or by the Porte. All this came at a time when Stephen Bocskai had designated Bálint Hommonnai as his successor and Gabriel Báthory had requested the Porte to appoint him as prince on the grounds of his illustrious descent. Having been Governor of Transylvania since the reign of Bocskai, Sigismund Rákóczi had administrated Transylvania in his absence and proved very skilful in exploiting favourable political circumstances. He had managed to rise from the ranks of the petty nobility to those of the aristocracy, becoming a candidate for the throne. The Transylvanian aristocracy was outraged by Bocskai's claim to appoint his own successor, which was a violation of the right of the Estates to freely choose their prince - *Let Bocskai not command us.*<sup>45</sup> The nobles preferred a candidate who had no external support, the only one residing in the country, unlike the others who had never lived in Transylvania. The situation was decided by the letter of Archduke Mathias, asking the nobles to wait for the emperor's decision, although under the Treaty of Vienna of 1606 there was no provision entitling the emperor to elect the Prince of Transylvania. To prevent any foreign intervention, the Diet of Transylvania did not wait for Bocskai's funeral and elected Sigismund Rákóczi as prince on 9 February 1607, facing Vienna and the Porte with a *fait accompli*.<sup>46</sup> Still, these events inspired fear of a new war and the cautious Sigismund Rákóczi offered the fortresses of Lipova and Ineu as compensation for the Turks' losses in the Fifteen-Year War. Peace was maintained thanks to the Turks, who accepted the election of Sigismund Rákóczi, refused the offer of the fortresses and offered to amend the terms of the Zsigvatorok Treaty. To avoid war, the Porte replaced Bálint Hommonnai's name in the documents with that of the *old and moderate* Sigismund Rákóczi,<sup>47</sup> the Ottomans declaring that all they expected of the new prince was to be loyal to the almighty sultan. Elected in February 1607, Sigismund Rákóczi had a short reign, since he retired in March 1608 following the uprising of the *hajduks*, thus avoiding the outbreak of a new conflict with the ambitious Gabriel Báthory. The abdication was interpreted as evidence of political skill and responsibility for the fate of the

<sup>42</sup> *SIGISMUNDUS RÁKOCZI. 1607–1608, watercolour*, Collections of MNIT, F 5807. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>43</sup> Romanian: Sigismund Rákóczi, Hungarian: Rákóczi Zsigmond.

<sup>44</sup> The Collections of the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest  
<http://www.npg.hu/index.php/component/jcollection/item/2434-rakoczi-zsigmond/> (6 September 2019).

<sup>45</sup> Lupescu, Makó 2006, p. 53.

<sup>46</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Andreescu 1989, 3–4.

<sup>47</sup> Felezeu 1996, 95.

Principality that would otherwise have been dragged into a new conflict. He also gained material advantages following his negotiations with Gabriel Báthory, who offered Rákóczi the estates of Szádvár and Sárosvár. Suspensions persisted in the aftermath of Rákóczi's abdication, who was accused of seeking only material gain, after he retreated to his estates in royal Hungary, accompanied, according to rumours, by carts filled with treasures and money. In any case, Transylvania had avoided a new civil war.<sup>48</sup>

**GABRIEL BÁTHORI. 1608–1613, watercolour (Figure no. 8)<sup>49</sup>**

On a terrace framed by vegetation is shown the portrait of Gabriel Báthory<sup>50</sup> (1589–1613), Prince of Transylvania in 1608–1613, in epoch garments. The prince is wearing long yellow boots with spurs, a green coat embroidered with plant motifs, fastened with a brown girdle, red trousers and short red cloak lined with fur. On his head he has a cap made of green cloth with a fur border matching the cloak, crowned by a plumage of greenish black colour. He is posing in a proud and arrogant attitude, typical of the depicted character. An engraving by Johann Martin Bernigeroth (1713–1767), *Gabriel Bathorj*, housed in the collections of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest,<sup>51</sup> features a similar version to this watercolour, a physiognomy with the same line of the nose, the eyes and the same type of moustache, the differences being the bushy beard (in the engraving) and the darker colour of the hair and the beard in the watercolour. Dazzling, well-mannered, endowed with a magnetic charm, Gabriel Báthory was a despotic, duplicitous and immoral prince, politically incompetent, blinded by unjustified ambitions. Gabriel Báthory seized the throne having ingeniously exploited the grievances of the *hajduks*, who were dismayed to find that all the promises of the late Prince Bocskai had been forgotten in a country impoverished by war; the only alternative was offered by Gabriel Báthory. On 5 February 1608, he signed an agreement with the captains of the *hajduks* who pledged to help him take control of Transylvania, provided that he supported Calvinism and took care of the *hajduks*' settlements. In March 1608, Gabriel Báthory was elected Prince of Transylvania, without firing a single shot, having been supported by the country's only significant armed force.<sup>52</sup> Gabriel Báthory's reign was characterised by instability, abuses and chaotic actions that triggered hostility and discord. Totally unprepared for his task, the young prince knew nothing about economic policies, arbitrarily extorted existing resources for costly festivities and failed to implement a rational and modern economic policy that would provide him with a consistent basis for his reign. His dream was to rule Poland like Stephen Báthory, but he also had ambitions for Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>53</sup> In early 1611, Gabriel Báthory

<sup>48</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 95–96.

<sup>49</sup> GABRIEL BÁTHORI. 1608–1613, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5808. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>50</sup> Romanian: Gabriel Báthory, Hungarian: Báthory Gábor.

<sup>51</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernigeroth\\_G%C3%A1bor\\_B%C3%A1thori.jpg/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernigeroth_G%C3%A1bor_B%C3%A1thori.jpg/) (11 September 2019).

<sup>52</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002.

<sup>53</sup> In 1608 Constantin Movilă, ruler of Moldavia, and Radu Șerban, ruler of Wallachia, became vassals of Gabriel Báthory.

intervened in Wallachia, occupied the fortress of Târgoviște,<sup>54</sup> but the Ottomans order him to return home.<sup>55</sup> His reckless action had severe consequences: during his adventure in Wallachia, the troops of the Pasha of Buda and those of the Pasha of Timișoara entered Transylvania for an attack from the rear, penetrating the territory of the *hajduks* who had set off for home. The Ottomans quickly received the order of withdrawal but the *hajduks* rose up again, ravaging the country. The incompetent prince had opened the gate for foreign interventions: Brașov, besieged by Báthory, asked Radu Șerban for help and the Captain General of Cașovia, Sigismund Forgách also raised arms against Gabriel Báthory. The country was devastated by the two military campaigns in the autumn of 1611, and the three nations demanded the expulsion of the despotic prince. The Porte agreed to appoint András Ghiczy (former captain of *hajduks*) as prince and he began negotiations with the Transylvanians for recognition. Báthory reacted typically for the Princes of the Transylvania and in the Diet of 26 June 1612, he proposed war against the Turks and associating with the Kingdom of Hungary, but the Estates refused, out of fear of catastrophic failure. The sudden change in the country's foreign politics threatened the position of Gabriel Bethlen, who had been instrumental in the relations with the Ottomans. Given the recent pro-Habsburg orientation, he had to take refuge in the Ottoman Empire, where he prepared for his return to the country as prince. An Ottoman army entered the country to support Bethlen and Gabriel Báthory withdrew to Oradea, determined to use every means to preserve his throne. He was murdered by his guards in Oradea on 27 October 1613, aged only 24.<sup>56</sup>

#### **GABRIEL BETHLEN, watercolour. 1613–1629 (Figure no. 9)<sup>57</sup>**

Portrait of Gabriel Bethlen<sup>58</sup> (1580–1629), Prince of Transylvania in 1613–1629, in epoch garments. The prince is posing from the profile, wearing a long cloak lined with ermine, a fur-trimmed cap and black plumage, knee-high boots and spurs. The left hand is resting, relaxed on the sword placed in its sheath. The red costume with green lining, the intense blue girdle, the green cloak and the yellow boots confirm his known passion for bright colours. Dark-skinned, bearded, with an unkempt heap of hair and a chunky body, Bethlen had a dark, unattractive appearance, but an extraordinary personality that demanded respect. In the 1620 portrait etched by Aegidius Sadeler (1570–1629), *GABRIEL BETHLEN D.G. TRANSYLVANIAE PRINCEPS, PARTIVM VNGARIAE REGNI DÑS, ET SICVLORVM COMES, Anno ætat XXXIX:à choNato MDCXX*,<sup>59</sup> what stand out are his sharp chin, the protruding lower jaw and the odd heap of hair on top of his head, but the watercolour presents an improved version of the prince, young, slender, with the head covered by a cap and his jutting chin masked by the beard. Gabriel Bethlen came from one of the richest and most prominent families in Transylvania, but was orphaned at 13, when he joined Sigismund Báthory's Court in Alba Iulia. Little if anything is known

<sup>54</sup> On which occasion Gabriel Báthory uses the title *Dei gratia Transylvaniae, Valachiae Transalpinæque Princeps, partium regni Hungariae Dominus et Siculorum Comes etc.*, see Andreescu 1989, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Andreescu 1989, 4–11.

<sup>56</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116.

<sup>57</sup> *GABRIEL BETHLEN. 1613–1629*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7174. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>58</sup> Romanian: Gabriel Bethlen, Hungarian: Bethlen Gábor.

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-1999-1360/> (10 September 2019); <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.461212/> (10 September 2019).

about his education, but at only 32 years of age, he was already an experienced general who had served his country under three princes, Moses Székely, Stephen Bocskay and Gabriel Báthory, and had been arrested by Sigismund Rákóczi. Endangered by Gabriel Báthory's new pro-Habsburg orientation, Bethlen prepared his ascent to the throne in a calculated manner. A skilful diplomat, a good connoisseur of the Ottoman Empire, he acted cautiously, gradually ensuring the support of the high Turkish officials. On 5 October 1613, Bethlen arrived in Transylvania with the highest concentration of Turkish-Tatar forces, about 80,000 people. The Diet convened in Cluj by Pasha Skander gave its ruling and, on 23 October 1613, Gabriel Bethlen became Prince of Transylvania. It was noted, with irony, that *they had chosen him freely, being so affrighted*. The Turkish troops withdrew after Báthory's death, leaving behind a devastated country, under firm control of the Porte.<sup>60</sup> His forced ascent to the throne, the handover of Lipova fortress and the memory of Gabriel Báthory's arbitrary rule sparked hostility against the new prince, but Bethlen proved to be a good expert on political realities and acted tactfully, managing to change the balance of power between the prince and the ruling classes. He avoided a direct confrontation and used the peculiarities of the Transylvanian society, where the rights of the Estates and of the prince were not firmly regulated. He began by reviewing all the donations and ennoblings between 1585 and 1615, which was an opportunity to increase his princely domain. He brought two changes to the system of governance: he marginalized the Diet qualitatively and quantitatively, thereby reducing the number of the convened sessions and of the members, who were, anyhow, nominated by the prince, while the second change consisted in the promotion of efficient economic policies. Through the two changes, he limited the Estates' prerogative of monitoring the power of the prince, who had an authoritarian rule. One of the most important statesmen, the brightest Prince of Transylvania, Bethlen secured a strong position for the Principality. His armies were never defeated and in the sixteen years of his reign, the country was not trampled by enemies. He maintained good diplomatic relations with the Turks, and his foreign policy was oriented against the Habsburgs. He participated in the Thirty-Year War, in three campaigns (1619, 1623, and 1626), in which he occupied territories in Slovakia and Hungary, becoming an important figure on the stage of international politics. He was a champion of confessional tolerance, culture, education and science. He set up a school of higher education and a library and invited to Alba-Iulia poets, musicians, artists and jewellers from Germany, Vienna and Venice. Bethlen encouraged trade, crafts, mining and exports, elements that generated the resources needed for a modern state to function. His policies underpinned a rise in living standards and the doubling of state revenues created the basis for his ambitious foreign policy and the princely luxury he later embraced. His wise policies provided a rare freedom of action for a small European state. Gabriel Bethlen's Transylvania asserted itself as a powerful and prestigious autonomous state. His reign is considered the *Golden Age of the Principality of Transylvania*.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Lendvai 2013, 124–136; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 583–593; Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Andea 2004, 320–325; Ingrao 2000, 39–40.



**GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI I. 1630–1642, watercolour (Figure no. 10)<sup>62</sup>**

On a terrace framed by vegetation, the portrait of George Rákóczi I<sup>63</sup> (1593–1648), Prince of Transylvania in 1630–1648, in epoch garments. The prince is wearing a red costume, knee-high yellow boots and pointed toes and spurs, a fur-trimmed cloth cap and rich plumage, fastened with a brooch with precious stones, and a red short coat lined with fur. He has a sceptre in his right hand, while his left hand rests on his hip, in a studied pose. The richness of colours, the imposing and demanding attitude excellently encapsulates the prince's character. While the engraving signed by Jan Gillisz van Vliet (1605–1668), after a drawing by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), *George I Rákóczi of Felsővadász*,<sup>64</sup> offers a youthful portrait of the prince, with very few features similar to the sketch in the series discussed here, the old-age portrait of the prince, *Felsővadászi I Öreg Rákóczi György erdélyi fejedelem*<sup>65</sup> conveys a physiognomy which is relatively close to that illustrated in the watercolour. Gabriel Bethlen's death temporarily brought his second wife, Catherine of Brandenburg, to the throne of the Principality, but she proved totally devoid of political skill and was forced to abdicate in favour of Stephen Bethlen, the brother of the former prince. George Rákóczi laid claims to the throne of the Principality and enjoyed the support of the *hajduks*. Negotiations took place, and the Porte sent two firmans, each in the name of one of the suitors, so it was up to the former princess to decide which name she would propose to the Diet. Her hatred of her former brother-in-law proved decisive and Catherine supported Rákóczi. The election took place on December 1, 1630. The imperials were engaged in the battles of the Thirty-Year War and the Ottomans were facing the Persians' uprisings, and thus, the three successive changes on the throne of the Principality from the period 1629 and 1630 did not provoke the intervention of the great powers.<sup>66</sup> The son of Sigismund Rákóczi, George Rákóczi I had a completely different temperament from his. Sigismund had been adaptable and sociable, two qualities that had helped him to progress through to the highest office in the state, and, when he realized that maintaining his position would have brought a risk to the country, he was wise enough to step down. By contrast, George Rákóczi was determined to seize the throne at all costs. His authoritarian measures, especially the confiscations of the noble estates with which he enriched his own family, caused discontent and led in 1636 to Stephen Bethlen's attempt to have him replaced, with the support of the Pasha of Buda. Determined to stay at the country's helm, Rákóczi defeated the Turks in the Battle of Salonta. As the conflict was, in fact, with local Ottoman politicians, the Porte did not turn against Rákóczi, allowing him to stay on the throne, unwilling to alter relations with him. Once this uprising was quelled, George Rákóczi started to intimidate the opposition and created an authoritarian reign. His reign was marked by executions and confiscations of estates, which made Rákóczi the richest landowner. In terms of foreign policy, the prince's anti-Habsburg orientation led him, in the autumn of 1643, to sign an alliance with the Protestant camp and to invade

<sup>62</sup> GEORGIUS RÁKOCZII. 1630–1642, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7175. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>63</sup> Romanian: Gheorghe Rákóczi I, Hungarian: I. Rákóczi György.

<sup>64</sup> The Collections of Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George\\_I\\_\(Gy%C3%B6rgy\)\\_R%C3%A1k%C3%B3czi\\_\(1593–1648\)\\_Rembrandt\\_van\\_Rijn\\_%26\\_Jan\\_Gillisz\\_van\\_Vliet.jpg/\(11 September 2019\)](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_I_(Gy%C3%B6rgy)_R%C3%A1k%C3%B3czi_(1593–1648)_Rembrandt_van_Rijn_%26_Jan_Gillisz_van_Vliet.jpg/(11%20September%202019)).

<sup>65</sup> <http://church.lutheran.hu/reformatio/pp.htm/> (11 September 2019).

<sup>66</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002.



Hungary. Following negotiations with Ferdinand III, approval was granted to his religious claims and, especially, to his personal requests related to his estates. As a result, he signed a separate peace treaty with the Habsburgs at Linz and withdrew his troops under the unrealistic pretext of Ottoman orders. The war brought him new domains, over which he expanded religious freedoms in favour of the Protestants, but also of the Orthodox. His era was one of economic and cultural flourishing. He consolidated his central power and Calvinism. The prince promoted the use of the mother tongue in education and in the church, not only for the Hungarian community, but also for the Germans and the Romanians. He supported the development of the education system in Transylvania. He established the elementary education system with Romanian as a language of instruction in 1669, when a series of Romanian elementary schools were opened. The first Romanian school, set up in Făgăraș in 1657, was owed to his wife, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy. Rákóczi also supported the first Romanian translation of the New Testament, *Biblia Rákóczi*, in 1648, in Alba-Iulia. George Rákóczi I is considered among the most prominent princes of Transylvania. This is due largely to the favourable international circumstances that rendered his reign as one of the most successful in the history of the Principality of Transylvania. He died on 11 October 1648 without having fulfilled his plan to place his son Sigismund on the Polish throne.<sup>67</sup>

#### GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI II. 1642–1658, watercolour (Figure no. 11)<sup>68</sup>

Portrait of George Rákóczi II<sup>69</sup> (1621–1660), Prince of Transylvania in the period 1648–1660, in epoch garments. The year 1642 recalls the moment of his election as an associate to the reign and successor to his father, George Rákóczi I, which laid the ground for a quiet succession.<sup>70</sup> On a terrace framed by vegetation, the prince is posing haughty, holding, in his left hand, the sceptre and, in his right hand, the cap with a fur border and bushy plumage, fastened by a brooch with precious stones. He is dressed in an elegant, pale pink costume, featuring a rich, black embroidery on both the jacket and the trousers, while the green sleeves match the broad green belt around his waist. He is wearing knee-high yellow boots with spurs and a fur-lined cloak, clamped on his shoulder with a thin string. The original cropped haircut, with a curly lock of hair on top of his head, individualizes him in a special way, as noticeable in the engraving *SERENISS. GEORGIVS RAGOTZINVS/TRANSSILVANLÆ PRINCEPS* signed *P. de Iode excudit*.<sup>71</sup> Ambitious but lacking in vision, George Rákóczi II had completely unrealistic self-aggrandizing ideas. He was involved

<sup>67</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Andea 2004, 330–334; Andea 2012, 47–56; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 595–600; Ingrao 2000, 47–48; Felezeu 1996, 91–116.

<sup>68</sup> *GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI II. 1642–1658*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5809. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>69</sup> Romanian: Gheorghe Rákóczi al II-lea, Hungarian: II. Rákóczi György.

<sup>70</sup> On 3 February 1642, the Diet of Transylvania elected George Rákóczi II as an associate to the reign and successor to his father, George Rákóczi I, which was supposed to ensure his smooth succession on the throne of Transylvania, but his actual reign began only when Prince George Rákóczi I passed away, on 11 October 1648.

<sup>71</sup> Pieter de Jode, 1606–1674, an engraver and editor in Antwerp. The etching appears in the series *THEATRVM/ Pontificvm/ Imperatorvm/ Regvm,/ Dvcvm,/ Principvm,/ etc./ Pace et Bello Illvstrivm*. It mentions, in the lower register, *Antverpiæ/ Apud Petrvm de Iode/ Chalcographvm. E. Quellinusinu., P. de Iode fecit*. See [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=3646811&partId=1&searchText=Van+Mol&page=1/](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=3646811&partId=1&searchText=Van+Mol&page=1/) (5 September 2019).

in the power struggles of the Romanian voivodates, and in his desire to ascend to the Polish throne, he ventured to Poland in 1657 as the ally of the Swedes, but the Polish-Tatar riposte in the Battle of Czarny Ostrów forced him to abandon his troops and flee back to his country, with an escort of 300 people. His army, led by General John Kemény, faced a real disaster and was completely captured by the Tatars. The new Grand Vizier Mehmed Köprülü decided to replace Rákóczi, accusing him of organizing the campaign in Poland despite the Sultan's will, of making an alliance with the Cossacks, who were the enemies of the Sultan, of invading Wallachia two years before, of bringing Transylvania into a dangerous situation and of fleeing from the Tatar Khan. The Diet was to choose a new prince. Francis Rhédey was elected as his successor. Rhédey was the cousin of Gabriel Bethlen, but George Rákóczi II reclaimed the throne and the Diet appointed him prince again on 14 January 1658. Political indecision determined the reaction of the Porte: the punishment expedition of May 1658 involved troops of Turks and Tatars, who advanced unopposed in the defenceless country, as Rákóczi had retreated to a safe distance, in Debrecen. Trying to save the day, Achatius Barcsay<sup>72</sup>, the former Governor of Transylvania during Rákóczi's Polish adventure, presented himself before the Grand Vizier and agreed to pay a huge annual tribute and war compensation. The Diet approved his appointment as prince on 7 October 1658. Thanks to the agreement gained by Barcsay, the Turks left the country, but the battle between supporters of the two princes, led to the outbreak of a civil war, complicated by the intervention of John Kemény, who had returned to the country in September 1659. The failure to pay the huge tribute led to a new Ottoman intervention in the devastated country, in 1660. With most of the army in Tatar captivity, Rákóczi was defeated in Gilău and, wounded in battle, he fled to Oradea, where he died from his wounds on 7 June 1660. Blinded by his lust for power, George Rákóczi II had caused the invasion of foreign armies in Transylvania and brought about a civil war, without considering the consequences of his actions, with the same nonchalance with which he had abandoned his troops in Tatar captivity and refused to pay the ransom demanded. Revoked and reinstated by the Diet, Rákóczi desperately clung to the throne, acting irresponsibly, proving his selfishness and utter contempt for the fate of others.<sup>73</sup>

#### **FRANCISCUS RHEDAI. 1658, watercolour (Figure no. 12) <sup>74</sup>**

In an orange costume, with the body at a three-quarter view and the head in profile, the prince is waving his sceptre in his right hand while keeping his left hand cautiously on his sword. He is wearing a wide green girdle, matching his green cuffs and the lining that is discreetly visible. He is not wearing a cloak, but has a fur-trimmed cap and black plumage. The costume fastened with buttons and golden flares is wrapped in the lower part and fastened with the help of the wide girdle. He is wearing long yellow boots and is holding his feet in unnatural, ballet-like posture, with his heels stuck together and his toes completely apart. His long, twisted moustache, his curly hair at his back and his gazing off into the

<sup>72</sup> Romanian: Acațiu Barcsay, Hungarian: Barcsay Ákos.

<sup>73</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 91–116; Andea 2004, 333–335; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 600–606; Ingrao 2000, 65–67.

<sup>74</sup> *FRANCISCUS RHEDAI. 1658, watercolour*, Collections of MNIT, F 5810. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

distance complete the portrait of Francis Rhédey<sup>75</sup> (1610–1667), the prince who occupied the throne of the Principality of Transylvania for a very short period of time, in the midst of the struggles for the replacement of George Rákóczi II.

**JOHANNES KEMENY. 1660–1661, watercolour (Figure no. 13)<sup>76</sup>**

With a direct gaze and his lips tightened in a subtle grin, two elements that are also found in his portrait by an unknown author, *Ioan Kemeny*, D: G: PRI: TRA:, cca. 1661,<sup>77</sup> John Kemény<sup>78</sup> (1607–1662) is walking gracefully in the watercolour, on tiptoes, as if dancing. He is dressed in a blue costume with golden flares that stretch to the wide red girdle around his waist. The red cuffs also match the long sword sheath that touches the ground. With his beard and moustache trimmed neatly, he is leaning with his left hand against the sword, while holding the sceptre in his right hand. We notice the spurs on his golden boots and his elegant cap with a fur border. Commander of the Transylvanian Army, Kemény was highly prized for his military skill. He had travelled on diplomatic missions to Berlin and Constantinople, campaigned in Poland and had been a prisoner with the Tatars. Appointed in 1652, by George Rákóczi II, as Governor of Transylvania, until the prince's son would come of age, he was elected to rule the country at the end of 1660 and was confirmed by the Diet, which had been convened on the first day of the year, 1661, in Reghin. Driven by a sense of mission and responsibility, Kemény accepted this dignity which, in his view, was a burden even in happy times. The new prince enjoyed the support of politicians and members of the high aristocracy, including Francis Rhédey. On 23 April 1661, the Diet in Bistrița declared the severance of Transylvania's relations with the Ottomans and announced that the Principality was now under the protection of the Habsburg emperor, in the belief that they were participating in a vast international military effort, but the anti-Ottoman campaign was no longer of topical interest: at the end of May, a secret agreement concluded between Leopold and the Turks recognized the new Ottoman conquests in exchange for the Ottomans' promise that they would not attack royal Hungary and acknowledged the cessation of the actions undertaken in Transylvania, where a new prince had to be elected. On 17 September 1661, the Diet convened under Ottoman threat and elected Michael Apafi as Prince of Transylvania. On 23 January 1662, the Ottoman army defeated Kemény's troops at Seleușul Mare. The prince lost his life in battle.<sup>79</sup>

**MICHAEL APAFFI I. 1661–1684, watercolour (Figure no. 14)<sup>80</sup>**

On a terrace framed by vegetation, with a fading mountain background, the portrait of Michael Apafi I<sup>81</sup> (1632–1690), Prince of Transylvania in 1661–1690<sup>82</sup>, in epoch garments.

<sup>75</sup> Romanian: Francisc Rhédey, Hungarian: Rhédey Ferenc.

<sup>76</sup> *JOHANNES KEMENY. 1660–1661*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5811. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>77</sup> <http://mek.niif.hu/01800/01885/html/cd5m/kepek/tortenelem/to213fo88006.jpg/> (12 September 2019).

<sup>78</sup> Romanian: Ioan Kemény, Hungarian: Kemény János.

<sup>79</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 107–111; Andea 2004, 335; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 603–607.

<sup>80</sup> *MICHAEL APAFFI I. 1661–1684*, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5812. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>81</sup> Romanian: Mihai Apafi I, Hungarian: I. Apafi Mihály.

<sup>82</sup> The year 1684 in the watercolour refer probably to the time of the election of his son, Michael Apafi II, as an associate to the reign, by the Diet, as Michael Apafi I was prince of Transylvania until his death, in 1690.

The prince is wearing yellow knee-high boots with spurs, a red costume, consisting of trousers and a jacket with golden buttons, over which, on his shoulder, he is wearing a red cloak lined with fur. With his tresses in the wind and his gaze fixed, he is holding the sceptre in his left hand and a furry cap in his right hand. His uptight countenance, also encountered in the engravings that depict him,<sup>83</sup> proves to be defining for this prince, who was propelled to the throne in complicated circumstances for Transylvania. Michael Apafi was a young, well-educated man, with a pensive disposition, who had to deal with a dwindling Transylvania, seriously weakened by a protracted political crisis, in which the central power was adversely affected. Secret agreements between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, as well as the endless battles between the two great powers over the course of a short period of time, between 1657 and 1664, led to Transylvania's losing a quarter of its territory. Apafi was faced with the turmoil caused by Emeric Thököly,<sup>84</sup> a talented military commander and organizer, an ambitious leader who, at the beginning of 1682, was asking to be made King of Hungary by the Turks, wishing to extend his power over Transylvania. Apafi chose the diplomatic path, consolidated his internal power and secured the election of his minor son as his heir. He also promoted a coherent economic policy. Caught between conflicting external pressures, Apafi struggled to preserve the Transylvanian state and managed to sign in Vienna, on 28 June 1686, a secret agreement with Leopold I, whereby the Principality's terms for the preservation of the state were accepted (the right of the Estates to choose their prince, religious freedom, the return of the territories belonging to Transylvania after their liberation from the Turks). The emperor pledged not to lay claim on the princely title or on Transylvania's coat-of-arms. The treaties proved worthless: the imperial troops invaded the country, ravaging everything in their path. Negotiations and the payment of huge sums provided guarantees that the emperor would respect the independence of the Principality.<sup>85</sup> Apafi's authority diminished, the Principality being virtually ruled by one of his advisers, Michael Teleki. On 9 May 1688, the *Făgăraș Declaration* was issued, whereby Transylvania changed the suzerainty of the Porte with that of Leopold I, Emperor and King of Hungary. Old age, illness and family problems had marked Apafi, who had struggled with deep depression in the last eighteen months of his reign. On 15 April 1690, he passed away. Dominated by his entourage, labelled as mediocre or a puppet of the Turks, Apafi had nonetheless succeeded, with his cautious attitude and realistic policy, to re-establish the central authority and to enforce diplomacy as the primary weapon for the maintenance of the Transylvanian state, by exploiting the discord between the great powers.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> *Michael I Apafi, 1666*, by Cornelis Meyssens (1640–1673) <http://images.konyvtar.elte.hu/szepseg/61.jpg/> (11 September 2019); *MICHAEL APAFI / Princeps Transylvaniae. Partium Regni / Hungariae Dominus et Siculorum / Comes*. <https://www.rct.uk/collection/611525/michael-apafi-princeps-transylvaniae/> (11 September 2019).

<sup>84</sup> Romanian: Emeric Thököly, Hungarian: Thököly Imre.

<sup>85</sup> In fact, in the mint of occupied Sibiu, the imperials issued pieces with the inscription *Capta Transylvania*, which commemorated the military occupation of the country.

<sup>86</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Felezeu 1996, 111–119; Lendvai 2013, 148–154; Bérenger 2000, 253; 261–265; Andea 2004, 348–352; Andea 2012, 47–56; Drăgoescu et alii 1997, 608–630; Ingrao 2000, 67–75, 85.

### MICHAEL APAFFI II. 1684–1686, watercolour (Figure no. 15)<sup>87</sup>

On a terrace framed by verdure, against a fading hilly backdrop, the portrait of Michael Apafi II<sup>88</sup> (1676–1713), posing dramatically, with his sceptre in his right hand, his sword in his scabbard, and his left hand on his hip. The frail youngster is pictured in epoch garment, with pink trousers and a green coat, with a gold girdle around his waist, pink knee-high boots with spurs and a white fur-lined coat. There is little information on Michael Apafi II, but it is known that he received a fine education. After the death of his father, the Porte appointed to the throne not his successor, Michael Apafi II, who had been confirmed by the Diet, but Emeric Thököly, who had control over the country between 1690–1692. Imperial military victories changed the balance of power. Thököly was removed and Michael Apafi II was enthroned as prince.<sup>89</sup> Until Prince Michael Apafi II came of age, Transylvania was to be administered by a governor, appointed by the Estates and confirmed by the emperor: George Bánffy. The court intrigues led the future prince to marry the governor's sister-in-law, General Bethlen's daughter, and the Habsburgs used this clandestine marriage as a pretext to detain him in Vienna during the anti-Ottoman war. When he came of age, in 1696, Michael Apafi II ceded the title of prince to Emperor Leopold I, who granted him a life annuity and the title of imperial prince. The prince was to remain in Vienna, where he died at the young age of 36.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to the series of princes, there is also a portrait of the emperor, who bore the title of Prince of Transylvania at the time of the publication of *Trachten-Kabinett von Siebenbürgens*:

### CAROLUS.VI. 1711–1740, watercolour (Figure no. 16)<sup>91</sup>

Unlike the other protagonists of the portraits, Charles VI of Habsburg<sup>92</sup> (1685–1740) is rendered inside, next to a table covered by a green curtain with golden tassels on which the insignia of power are placed: the sword and the orb with the cross are placed randomly, while the crown is carefully positioned on a red pillow embroidered in gold. The last portrait of the series depicts a wealthy character, draped in a rich cloak embroidered in gold, adorned with precious stones, lined with fine red silk. The expensive armour, the rich ruffles of the shirt, the hat with flamboyant feathers, the long, curly wig, the collar of the order of the Golden Fleece, worn around the neck, all these are the elements that make up an official portrait in festive Baroque style, *kaiserstil*, which reflected the glory of their victories against the Ottomans and made it possible for the monarchy to legitimise itself as a great power. With one hand on his hip and the other resting on the sceptre, a direct gaze and a barely visible smile in the corner of the lips, the emperor is posing with a martial

<sup>87</sup> MICHAEL APAFFI II. 1684–1686, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5813. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>88</sup> Romanian: Mihai Apafi al II-lea, Hungarian: II. Apafi Mihály.

<sup>89</sup> The years in the watercolour, 1684–1686, refer probably to the time of his election by the Diet, as an associate to the reign and successor to his father, respectively to the time of the imperial military occupation of Transylvania.

<sup>90</sup> Köpeczi et alii, II 2002; Bérenger 2000, 263–265; Ingrao 2000, 85; Andea 2004, 350–352.

<sup>91</sup> CAROLUS.VI. 1711–1740, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7176. Size: w = 35.5 cm; L = 22.9 cm.

<sup>92</sup> Romanian: Carol al VI-lea, Hungarian: VI. Károly.



attitude, frequently encountered in the portraits depicting him, especially in those painted by Johann Gottfried Auerbach (1697–1753).<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ingrao 2000, 120–126; Wheatcroft 2003, 352.



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**Figure no. 1:** JOHANNES I 1538–1540, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5801.



**Figure no. 2:** STEPHANUS BÁTHORI 1571–1576, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5802.



**Figure no. 3:** CHRISTOPHORUS BÁTHORI 1576–1581, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5803.



**Figure no. 4:** ANDREAS BÁTHORI 1599–1601, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5804.





**Figure no. 5:** GEORGIUS BASTA. 1603–1605, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5805.



**Figure no. 6:** STEPHANUS BOSKAI. 1605–1607, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5806.



**Figure no. 7:** SIGISMUNDUS RÁKOCZI. 1607–1608, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5807.



**Figure no. 8:** GABRIEL BÁTHORI. 1608–1613, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5808.





**Figure no. 9:** GABRIEL BETHLEN. 1613–1629, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7174.



**Figure no. 10:** GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI I. 1630–1642, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 7175.



**Figure no. 11:** GEORGIUS RÁKOCZI II. 1642–1658, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5809.



**Figure no. 12:** FRANCISCUS RHEDAI. 1658, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5810.





**Figure no. 13:** JOHANNES KEMENY. 1660–1661, watercolour, Collections of MNIT, F 5811.



**Figure no. 14:** MICHAEL APAFFI I. 1661–1684, watercolour, Collections of MNIT F 5812.



**Figure no. 15:** MICHAEL APAFFI II. 1684–1686, watercolour, Collections of MNIT F 5813.



**Figure no. 16:** CAROLUS. VI. 1711–1740, watercolour, Collections of MNIT F 7176.

## “AT WAR WITH BOLSHEVISM” – THE MEMOIRS OF MILITARY CHAPLAIN IOAN DĂNCILĂ ABOUT THE ROMANIAN ARMY’S CAMPAIGN IN HUNGARY

MIRCEA-GHEORGHE ABRUDAN<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The Union of Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș with the Kingdom of Romania, adopted on 1 December 1918, enshrined the sincere and freely expressed desire of the Romanians in these lands to be part of Greater Romania. Embraced by the entire Romanian nation, the Alba Iulia decision was rejected by the Hungarian Government led by Mihály Károlyi and militarily opposed by the Bolshevik Government of Béla Kun, installed in Budapest in March 1919. This led to a Romanian-Hungarian military confrontation that culminated in the occupation of Budapest by the Romanian Army on August 4, 1919 and the removal of the Hungarian communist regime. The Romanian troops were accompanied, in their campaign to Hungary, by seventy military chaplains, a part of them came from Transylvania. Some of them wrote campaign journals, others later recounted their experiences by having them published anthumously and posthumously. Ioan Dăncilă was such a priest. In the interwar period, he became archpriest of the Romanian Army with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He left to posterity an important theological, historiographical and memoirist work, which is far too little known. In the first part of this study, the life and work of Ioan Dăncilă is briefly described, while in the second part, we present his memoirs of the spring of 1919, when he joined the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Sibiu in the campaign of the Romanian Army in Hungary.

**Keywords:** World War I, Hungarian Bolshevik regime, Béla Kun, Transylvania, Greater Romania

**Rezumat:** Unirea Transilvaniei, Banatului, Crișanei și Maramureșului cu Regatul României, adoptată la 1 Decembrie 1918, a consfințit dorința sinceră și liberă a românilor din aceste ținuturi de a face parte din România Mare. Îmbrățișată de întreaga națiune română, decizia de la Alba Iulia a fost respinsă de guvernul maghiar Mihály Károlyi și combătută militar de guvernul bolșevic al lui Bela Kun, instalat la Budapesta în martie 1919. În acest fel s-a ajuns la o confruntare militară româno-maghiară finalizată cu ocuparea Budapestei de către armata română în 4 august 1919 și înlăturarea regimului comunist ungar. Trupele române au fost însoțite în campania din Ungaria de zece preoți militari, trei fiind originari din Transilvania. Unii dintre ei au scris jurnale de campanie, alții și-au redactat ulterior experiențele trăite, publicându-le antum și postum. Un asemenea preot a fost Ioan Dăncilă, ajuns în perioada interbelică protoiereu al armatei române cu grad de locotenent-colonel, care a lăsat posterității o operă teologică, istoriografică și memorialistică importantă, însă mult prea puțin cunoscută. În prima parte a acestui studiu este descrisă pe scurt viața și activitatea lui Ioan Dăncilă, iar în a doua parte sunt prezentate amintirile sale din primăvara anului 1919, când a participat alături de Regimentul 90 Infanterie Sibiu în campania armatei române din Ungaria.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Primul Război Mondial, regimul bolșevic maghiar, Béla Kun, Transilvania, România Mare

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### **Preliminary remarks**

The decision to unite Transylvania, Banat, Crișana and Maramureș with Romania, adopted on 18 November / 1 December 1918 by the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia, confirmed the sincere and freely expressed desire of the Romanians in these lands to be part of the great national project of Greater Romania. Embraced and festively celebrated by the whole nation, the Resolution of Alba Iulia was rejected by the Hungarian Government led by Károlyi and militarily opposed by the Bolshevik Government of Bela Kun, which had been installed in Budapest in March 1919. Thus, in the first part of 1919, a Romanian-Hungarian military confrontation culminated in the occupation of Budapest by the Romanian Army on August 4, 1919 and the removal of the Hungarian communist regime, which had intended to spread the Bolshevik social revolution throughout Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The Romanian troops were accompanied by military chaplains in the Hungarian campaign, as it happened during the entire period of the Great War for restoring the country's unity. In addition to the monthly reports submitted to the Religious Service affiliated to the General Headquarters, some priests kept campaign diaries. Others wrote down their experiences at a later time, publishing their memoirs during their lifetime. Ioan Dăncilă was such a priest. In the interwar period, he became archpriest of the Romanian Army with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He left to posterity an important theological, historiographical and memoirist work, which is, however, far too little known.<sup>2</sup> Now, one century after the Romanian Army's campaign to Hungary, we wish to dedicate this study to him. His biography will be briefly overviewed and then the study will focus on the way in which he remembered the time he spent, in the spring of 1919, with the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Sibiu, during the campaign of the Romanian Army to the north-western part of Transylvania, the Tisa Plain and Central Hungary.

### **Ioan Dăncilă – a biographical cameo**

Ioan Dăncilă was born in the village of Manderău, Hunedoara, on June 2/14, 1889, in the family of the Orthodox priest Constantin Dăncilă (1860–1942)<sup>3</sup> and of his wife Maria Dăncilă. He attended primary school in the Orthodox confessional school in his native village, then those of the Hungarian State Gymnasium in Deva between 1899 and 1907. In the autumn of the same year, he enrolled in the Andreian Theological Seminary in Sibiu, which he graduated in 1910. In the same year he married Maria, the daughter of Fr. Victor Cioară of Geoagiu de Sus. She gave him three little „darlings,” as he affectionately wrote on the reverse side of a photo sent from the front on 10 November 1916. Their names were: Ioan-Marius, Ștefan and Mioara. On 20 September 1910 he was ordained a priest by Metropolitan Ioan Mețianu for the parish of the Monastery Râpa Râmețului in the Trascău Mountains.<sup>4</sup> He published a well-documented study about it in 1925.<sup>5</sup> Between 1911 and 1916 he continued his studies at the Faculty of Law of Ferencz Joska University in Cluj.

<sup>2</sup> Păcurariu 2014, 205–206; Păcurariu 2015, 560–568; Păcurariu 2018, 486–487; Pentelescu, Petcu 2016 a, 99–104, 255–258; Pentelescu, Petcu 2016 b, 105–110.

<sup>3</sup> Petrescu 2012, 44–52.

<sup>4</sup> Petrescu, Goțiu 2006, 295–297.

<sup>5</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 65–93.

On June 2, 1915, he was mobilized as a military chaplain in the imperial-royal army of the 31<sup>st</sup> Orăștie Regiment.<sup>6</sup> Along with this military unit which largely comprised Romanians, he fought on the fronts of Galicia and Italy until 1 November 1918, when he was demobilized. During the three and a half years he spent as a military chaplain in the Great War, Ioan Dăncilă carried out an exceptional pastoral activity. He captured the meanings of the military clergy's mission in an extremely valuable study published in the 1917 editions of „Telegraful Român” (“The Romanian Telegraph”) and later resumed in the volume entitled „În slujba neamului prin Evanghelie. Îndrumări morale și naționale” (“In Service of the Nation through the Gospel. Moral and National Guidance”) published in Sibiu in 1925.<sup>7</sup> Fr. Dăncilă's work is a worthy one, being in fact the only comprehensive study of military pastorate published by a Romanian Orthodox clergyman during World War I. Other experiences that he had on the front were recollected in the form of sketches, memories and evocations published in his books that appeared in Sibiu during the interwar period. At the same time, Ioan Dăncilă supported the efforts of the Archdiocese of Transylvania to set up an orphanage for war orphans<sup>8</sup> by organizing, during the summer of 1916, a fundraising campaign among the soldiers of the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment, to which he contributed personally with the sum of 7,000 kroner.<sup>9</sup> Like the other military chaplains, he was extremely attentive to the spiritual needs of the soldiers in those difficult moments of distress and anguish generated by the experiences of the front, by the scourge of death and suffering. He sent several requests to the Metropolitan Consistory of Sibiu to supplement the number of printed prayer books and to dispatch them to the soldiers on the front.<sup>10</sup> His fruitful military pastoral activity was not overlooked by his superiors. On September 29, 1917, Archpriest Pavel Boldea, the superior of the Orthodox military clergy of the Austro-Hungarian army, proposed, to the Metropolitan Consistory of Sibiu that the red sash distinction should be awarded to Ioan Dăncilă.<sup>11</sup>

Like many Transylvanians, the brother of the military chaplain Ioan Dăncilă, Constantin Dăncilă, born on August 2, 1897, crossed the border into Romania after the war declaration of August 15/28, 1916, voluntarily joining the Romanian Army and being promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant.<sup>12</sup> Having remained at home, the father of the two combatants kept the flame of Romanian national sentiment ablaze and became actively involved in the events of the autumn of 1918. Thus, in the people's assembly held in the parish church of Mănerău on 10 November, 1918, Fr. Constantin Dăncilă was elected president of the Romanian National Council in the village, while Sergeant Ilie Cuș became commander of the National Guard. Cuș and George Pogea were the representatives of the community in the Great National Assembly held in Alba Iulia.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Arhiva Mitropoliei Ardealului*, doc. 7785 of 18.08.1915.

<sup>7</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 29–64.

<sup>8</sup> For details, see Mârza 2007, 93–100; Stan 2016, 251–263.

<sup>9</sup> *Arhiva Mitropoliei Ardealului*, doc. 4776 of 07.05.1916, doc. 7728 of 19.07.1915; Petresc, Goțiu 2006, 297. For details about the charitable actions of the Romanians in Transylvania during the war, see Bolovan 2015, 125–137.

<sup>10</sup> *Arhiva Mitropoliei Ardealului*, doc. 7320 of 06.10.1917.

<sup>11</sup> *Arhiva Mitropoliei Ardealului*, doc. 7075 of 29.09.1917.

<sup>12</sup> Petresc, Goțiu 2006, 299–300.

<sup>13</sup> Petresc, Goțiu 2006, 287; Popa 2018, 125.

After he was demobilized, Ioan Dăncilă returned to the parish of Râpa Râmețului Monastery and officially resumed his ministry as a parish priest in January 1919.<sup>14</sup> His discharge would not last long, however. On 8 April 1919 he was again mobilized, this time in the Romanian Army, as a confessor priest of the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment P.O. Sibiu, on the front of North-Western Transylvania and Hungary. After the end of the war and the pacification of the region, he was demobilized together with the entire Romanian Army on April 1, 1921. Because of his pastoral qualities, he remained in the active troops of the Romanian Army up to 1 September 1947, when he was honourably discharged. His pastoral care activity in the army had lasted 36 years, 11 months and 23 days.

Like the vast majority of Romanians, Ioan Dăncilă never forgot his ancestry and his brethren from his native village. As confessor of the 7th Army Corps Sibiu, Fr. Dăncilă supported his fellow villagers incorporated in the Sibiu Garrison and he was held in high regard by his soldiers. Pogea Vintilă of Mănerău, born in 1931, confessed that „many of us were conscripted in Sibiu and he helped them. During the week he did military service, as a colonel, and on Sundays he served in the Great Cathedral of Sibiu, as a priest. He took the whole regiment to church on Sunday.”<sup>15</sup> His manifold activity was not limited to military and civil pastoral duties, but also took into account the social, cultural and associationist environment in Transylvania. Like many Transylvanian priests, Fr. Ioan Dăncilă was involved in the activity of the ASTRA Association, in the cultural, administrative and social pedagogy field.

He was also a member of the Central Committee of the „Andrei Șaguna Association of the Orthodox Clergy in Transylvania, Crișana and Maramureș,” the secretary of the Transylvania Regional Committee of the „Hero Worship” Society, and was often a speaker at the meetings of the „Romanian Craftsmen’s Association” in Sibiu. His practical spirit stood out especially in 1921, when he organized a fundraising campaign in the military schools of Sibiu for the restoration of the old church of Râmeț Monastery, managing to collect the amount of 29,874 lei.<sup>16</sup>

The service military chaplain Ioan Dăncilă brought to the nation, the army and the church was rewarded by the Romanian Army, the Romanian state and the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the following military grades, civilian homers, and ecclesiastical distinctions: major (1920), lieutenant-colonel (1929), colonel (1940); the „Crown of Romania” Knight’s Order (1920); the Reward of Work for the Church, first grade (1923); the War Memorial Cross, 1916–1919 (1923); the „Star of Romania” Order, fifth class (1927); the „Crown of Romania” Order in rank of Officer (1931); the Cultural Merit Medal, second class (in 1932); the red sash (1932), archbishop of the military clergy, and vicar of the Army’s Diocese (1940).<sup>17</sup>

After being honourably discharged, he re-entered the ranks of the civilian clergy, serving in Geoagiu de Sus, his wife’s home village, for three decades (1947–1979). Upon her death, which occurred on September 13, 1979, he retired to Aiud, staying

<sup>14</sup> *Arhiva Mitropoliei Ardealului*, doc. 442 of 31.01.1919.

<sup>15</sup> Petresc, Goțiu 2006, 298–299.

<sup>16</sup> Petresc, Goțiu 2006, 299–300; Moga 2003, 327.

<sup>17</sup> Pentelescu, Petcu 2016, 100–101.

with the family of his daughter Mioara. There he passed away on June 20, 1983, at the venerable age of 94.<sup>18</sup>

### **Ioan Dăncilă's memoirs about the campaign in Transylvania and Hungary**

At the beginning of December 1918, the Romanian Army crossed the Carpathians again, entering Transylvania. The advance of the Romanian troops complied with the stages established by the Allied Command, in accordance with the provisions of the Belgrade Military Armistice convention of 13 November 1918. The first stage had as limit the Mureș River, operations taking place in November-December 1918, when the Romanian troops occupied, one by one, Brașov, Făgăraș, Sibiu, Sighișoara, TârguMureș, Alba Iulia, Deva, Hunedoara, Aiud, Turda, Dej and, finally, Cluj, on Christmas Eve „new style.“ Sidonia Docan, Secretary of the Romanian National Senate in Cluj, wrote in her diary on December 24, 1918

“Young and old, everyone is running to Matthias Square to welcome the Romanian Army in Cluj. Is this not a dream? [...] The entry of the army, headed by Generals Neculcea and Gherescu, with a martial appearance, produces an indescribable emotion. Men are crying, women are crying, children, too, all are shaken by a holy emotion. Then they dance a hora around the square, around Matthias.”<sup>19</sup>

Some people today might find such confessions rather pathetic, but they should be read and understood in the extremely difficult socio-political and national context of those times. Terrifying news about the persecution and massacres of the Romanians after the Great National Assembly held in Alba-Iulia was coming from all corners of Transylvania, which was yet to come under the protection of the Romanian Army.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, overcoming the Mureș alignment was due to the summons of the Romanians from Northern and North-Western Transylvania, who requested the swift intervention of the Romanian Army in order to put an end to the terror inflicted by the Hungarian troops and Szekler gangs, to ensure the security of people and goods, and to pacify the regions.<sup>21</sup>

In this new campaign from Transylvania and Hungary, the Romanian troops were accompanied by seventy military chaplains, among them were: Fr. Mircea Brăescu in the 10<sup>th</sup> Putna Regiment; Constantin Cărlanin the 11<sup>th</sup> Siret Infantry Regiment; Fr. Captain Iosif Comănescu, „a native of Transylvania, a good preacher, committed heart and soul to the Romanian Army, which he served with devotion, very well-read and a patriot,”<sup>22</sup> in the „Queen Elizabeth“ 2<sup>nd</sup> Huntsmen Regiment; Fr. Gheorghe Ciosu in the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment; Fr. Ioan Dăncilă in the Sibiu Garrison; Fr. Ilarion Dodu in the 6<sup>th</sup> Tecuci Regiment no. 24; Fr. Ioan Nanu in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Huntsmen Regiment, a parish priest in Râșnov before the war;<sup>23</sup> Fr. Ioan Partenie, originally from Bukovina, in the 15<sup>th</sup> Războieni Regiment, a

<sup>18</sup> Păcurariu 2015, 568.

<sup>19</sup> Muntean 2018, 80.

<sup>20</sup> For details on these anti-Romanian actions, see Vaida 2018, 213–233; Bădescu 2018; Gociman 1995; Mezea 1935.

<sup>21</sup> Out 2017, 92–127.

<sup>22</sup> Nicolescu et alii, III 2018, 256.

<sup>23</sup> Nicolescu et alii, I 2018, 325.

prisoner of the Hungarian Bolsheviks for 56 days; Archimandrite Iustin Șerbănescu in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Huntsmen Division; and Fr. Nicolae Vasilescu in Ploiești in the Mountain Huntsmen Regiment.<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that three of the ten priests were from Transylvania. Their participation in this campaign proved that the Transylvanian clergy supported the „liberation of Transylvania“ not only morally and spiritually, but also directly and personally, through the mobilization of the three aforementioned priests in this campaign. Speaking about the war, when 244 Orthodox priests and 80 Greek-Catholic priests from Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina<sup>25</sup> had been forced to fight alongside their countrymen in „a foreign army,“ Fr. Ioan Dăncilă confessed, in retrospect, that the priesthood had „dutifully fulfilled its call,“ because every Romanian priest had considered himself „a representative of the Romanian nation and of the Orthodox Romanian Church, elected by divine providence to fight for alleviating the sufferings of his wretched brethren, who also contributed by sacrificing their lives to the happiness of today.”<sup>26</sup> Writing about the mission and the role of the military chaplains in the Great War, without drawing inspiration from the scientific literature, but making reference to his own experience, Fr. Major Dăncilă pointed out that

“The chaplain of the regiment, and especially the chaplain on the front, is not only a shepherd of souls and a comforter of the weak, but also a faithful and devoted comrade, who shares with the soldiers their fatigue, lack, and the danger of death. He is a counsellor and an advisor, for he strengthens the soldier’s soul with his words, and eases the hardships of those around him through deeds that deserve to be emulated. The chaplain of the unit is both the humble servant of the Heavenly Father and a hero that looks down on death when the interest of the troop requires it, setting an example by putting his life at risk and, thus, bringing life and new strength to the arms and hearts of the weary soldiers.”<sup>27</sup>

The comments of Ioan Dăncilă are fully confirmed by the military chaplains’ activity during World War I. Both their reports to the General Headquarters and the assessments of the General Staff and of the regiment commanders attested the positive role of the clergy in support of the soldiers’ military effort.<sup>28</sup>

In January 1919, a new demarcation line was negotiated between the territories controlled by the Romanian and Hungarian governments. This time, the Sighet – Baia Mare - the western part of the Apuseni Mountains was established and, on March 23, 1919 - the line of the Arad – Oradea – Carei – Satu Mare railway. At this stage, the first open military confrontations occurred between the Romanian troops, on the one hand, and the Hungarian civilians and the Hungarian Bolshevik troops in retreat, on the other hand. The atmosphere was heated and tense because of the refusal of the Károlyi Hungarian Government to recognize the Union proclaimed by the National Assembly of Alba Iulia. A direct, eloquent testimony regarding the situation in North-Western Transylvania was

<sup>24</sup> Păcurariu 2018, 361; for a brief overview of their activity during the war, see Nicolescu et alii, III, doc. 309, 202–270; Nazarie 2018, 75–195.

<sup>25</sup> Zaharia 2016, 279–314.

<sup>26</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 62.

<sup>28</sup> Nazarie 2018; Nicolescu et alii, I-II-III 2018; Cotan 2018.



provided by military chaplain Ioan Partenie of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Războieni. Partenie reported to the General Headquarters on May 5, 1919, that he had been taken prisoner by Hungarian soldiers in Zalău on February 23, 1919. The humiliations he was subjected to revealed the interethnic tension in the area, generated by the spirit of retaliation exhibited by the Hungarian troops and some Hungarian civilians, following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the disintegration of the Hungarian Kingdom

"I was taken prisoner by the Hungarian soldiers. My hands were tied behind my back and I was taken with some others to prison. In the town square I almost got shot twice by the civilian population. I was badly beaten with the rifles. I and all the officers were taken to another market where we were to be executed. We all escaped, except for a Transylvanian lieutenant, as if by miracle. The civilians took my money, my watch and my entire luggage and all my priestly and clerical things. (...). Zalău was attacked by over 2,000 Hungarian soldiers and 1,000 armed civilians."

At the same time, Fr. Partenie explained the Hungarians' bitter aversion against him not so much in terms of his Romanian military uniform, but especially because he belonged to the clergy, stating that

"the Hungarians' hatred against the Romanian priests in Transylvania is pouring over me. In Tuşnad, I was held in a cell in the freezing cold of February. In Sătmar, I was the object of all the curses proffered by the Szeklers. The most absurd accusations were brought against us and the refugee population in Zalău demanded that we should be handed over to them to tear us to pieces. I had to destroy my priestly clothes, shave and trim my hair with the machine and dress as a soldier to escape being hanged. No money, one shirt, in jail, without going out and forever threatened by death that was my experience as a prisoner."<sup>29</sup>

This testimony certifies the fact that the Hungarians perceived the priests as an important part of the Romanian elites, who had nourished the national sentiment and had brought a major contribution to the national liberation movement of the Romanians in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In other words, they had made a major contribution to the Romanians' disavowal of Budapest and their collective embrace of the idea of the united nation-state that the Transylvanian Romanians had built together with their brothers from the Old Kingdom, Bessarabia and Bukovina, through the proclamation of Alba-Iulia. In fact, this idea was not an isolated one, but was a common one in the era. Fr. Dr. Sebastian Stanca, who was himself, imprisoned by the Hungarian government for his uncompromising Romanian ideas from 1916 to 1918, gathered in a book, published in Cluj in 1925, the testimonies of hundreds of priests who had been arrested, imprisoned, and banished by the Hungarian authorities after Romania's entry in the war.<sup>30</sup> The reason for the Hungarian reprisals against the clergy was clear for Sebastian Stanca and his contemporaries

<sup>29</sup> Nicolescu et alii, II 2018, 464–466.

<sup>30</sup> Stanca 2015.

“the Hungarian rulers understood too well that the priests were the vestals who had kept alive the flame of national faith in the Romanian people’s hearts and their fury pounced especially on the priests, deluded by the vain belief that „if I beat the shepherd, the flock will be scattered.“ They beat the shepherds, but the flocks did not scatter because they had planted, in the soul of their flocks, strong faith, reinforced through suffering in the hope for godly justice.”<sup>31</sup>

The Romanian-Hungarian relations worsened after 21 March 1919, when the Soviet Republic of Councils was proclaimed in Budapest under the leadership of Béla Kun, a Hungarian of Jewish origin from Transylvania. Soon the Hungarian Army was Bolshevized and began to sow anarchy and violence. The military chaplain Ioan Partenie described the atmosphere as follows

“The Bolsheviks do not admit officers or grades, they are against religion and especially against priests. Our situation, the officers’ situation, and especially mine, was terrifying. We expected, at every moment, to be killed by those scumbags. They could easily have done it because there was no authority, no rule, no justice. Everyone did what they wished and they could also kill us without liability. We could see that we had no choice but to be liberated by the Romanian Army or join the Red Guard, but we, the officers and the soldiers, refused all their proposals. We told them to shoot us, but we would never join the Red Guard. Racovschi’s Romanian propagandists came to us in prison to urge and threaten us to join the Red Guard.”<sup>32</sup>

On the night of 15 to 16 April 1919, Hungarian troops and Szekler units attacked the Romanian Army stationed on the Someș Valley and in the Ciucea area of the Apuseni Mountains. The Romanian Army immediately launched a counteroffensive and, within five days, it occupied the Satu Mare, Carei, Oradea and Salonta. On May 1, 1919 it reached the Tisa River, meeting the Czechoslovak troops to the north and the French-Serbian troops to the south. Facing the approximately 60,000 Hungarian soldiers there were 6 Romanian infantry divisions and 3 cavalry brigades, a total of about 64,000 soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

Along with the troops that were massively attacked in the Apuseni Mountains by the Hungarian Army but that managed to drive the Hungarian units into a speedy retreat was Fr. Ioan Dăncilă, remobilized on April 8, 1919, this time under the Romanian banner, with the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Sibiu, the operative section. Some of Ioan Dăncilă’s experiences in this campaign „against the Hungarians“ on the Tisa were recollected in two texts, which belong to the genre of memoirs, published at a distance of three and six years after the events. In the first, entitled „Landscapes of Ciucea,“ edited in the volume of sketches „Man and Character“ (first edition, 1922 and second edition, 1924)<sup>34</sup> dedicated to the students

<sup>31</sup> Stanca 2015, 42.

<sup>32</sup> Nicolescu et alii, II 2018, 466–467. For another extended report of Fr. Partenie sent to Metropolitan Pimen Georgescu on May 14, 1919, about the situation in Transylvania, see Cotan 2018, 844–850.

<sup>33</sup> There is a substantial literature on the Romanian Army’s campaign to Hungary, occupation of Budapest and removal of Béla Kun’s Bolshevik regime, including editions of sources and scholarly studies. See Kirițescu 2017, 385–502; Mărdăresu 2009; Moșoiu 2012; Ciubotă, Nicolescu, Țucă 1998; Preda et alii 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Dăncilă 1922, 48–52; Dăncilă 1924, 46–50.

of the „Prince Carol“ Infantry Military School of Sibiu, the military chaplain recounted the moments he had experienced in „the picturesque mountain village of Ciucea“ in the Apuseni Mountains, which had acquired „historic importance“ at the time of the Romanian-Hungarian military confrontations. The urge to write down on paper these experiences came from his conviction that he was writing history, leaving for posterity a first-hand testimony about the „suffering of the people there and everywhere,“ about the heroism and sacrifice of the Romanian soldiers, as well as the horrors committed by the Hungarian Bolshevik gangs against the Romanian civilian population and army.

The 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Sibiu reached Ciucea after marching on foot for a gruelling eight hours on the first day of Easter in 1919, being welcomed with „joy“ and „love“ by the villagers, who returned to their homes as soon as the Bolsheviks had retreated. The landscape that lay before their eyes was a desolate one, the disaster left behind by Béla Kun’s troops prompting Fr. Dăncilă to describe the Hungarians through a series of negative, extremely harsh phrases and epithets, such as „executioners,“ „bandits with sideburns“ and „dogs from the steppes of Asia.“ The gruesome experience from the next day, occasioned by the funeral of five soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Siret Regiment, vilely abused by the enemy, and his visit to the Romanian church in Ciucea, desecrated by the Hungarian Bolshevik troops who had shot the icons and frescoes, made Father Dăncilă resort to an even more bitter rhetoric when writing about this „eternally painful memory.“ His comrades had become „holy martyrs“ sacrificed by „ferocious wild beasts, escaped from prison chains,“ the church that had been defiled in a „vile and diabolical“ manner rendering the Bolsheviks as „pagans,“ „blood-hungry hyenas craving Christian holiness“ and even „devils with human faces.“ What he saw awakened in his heart and in that of his comrades a thirst for revenge that found its „just satisfaction“ at the time of the conquest of Hungary’s capital, when the Romanian tricolour was hoisted on the „proud dome of the Budapest Parliament that had defied a whole world.”<sup>35</sup>

Ioan Dăncilă was not the only military chaplain who passed with the regiment through the Ciucea region, around Easter 1919, noting the devastation left behind by the Hungarian troops. Fr. M. Brăescu, chaplain of the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, reported to the General Staff, on April 3, 1919, that he had been forced to hold „unpaid daily service for three villages located in the operation and the neutral areas, that is: Bologa, Poeni, and Sebeșul Mare (today, Valea Drăganului, in the county of Cluj, *our note*), whose priests had taken refuge because of the army operations.”<sup>36</sup> One of the three priests was the martyr archpriest Aurel Munteanu (1882–10 September 1940), who later reported that in those days he had lost his „nine-month-old child (...), killed by the Hungarians.”<sup>37</sup>

The second text signed by Fr. Ioan Dăncilă about the Tisa campaign is entitled “At War with Bolshevism” and was published in 1925 and 1930 in his volumes of „Moral and National Guidance“ for the Romanian soldiers.<sup>38</sup> Written at a greater distance from the respective events, the tone is no longer as harsh against the Hungarians as in the previous text about Ciucea. Fr. Dăncilă aimed this time to engage in a general retrospective on the

<sup>35</sup> Dăncilă 1924, 41–62.

<sup>36</sup> Nicolescu et alii, II 2018, 429–430.

<sup>37</sup> Stanca 2015, 144–145.

<sup>38</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 115–128; Dăncilă 1930, 129–142.

Romanian military campaign against the „sticky and dangerous ideas of Bolshevism,“ in the desire to extract moral and national lessons for the cadets of the Sibiu military schools, but also to provide a „historical document“ about those events for posterity. From the very beginning, the author testifies that his main mission in the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Sibiu was to combat the „infectious and perilous ideas and currents of Bolshevism“ at a time when the social-political and military context in Transylvania fostered their spread.<sup>39</sup> The four years of the war, with its horrors and terrors, had largely drained the resources of the Romanian soldiers. In the revolutionary chaos triggered by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, they could be contaminated with the anarchic ideas promoted by the communists: „We don't need rulers, or control, or priests, or church, or army, or kings, the men with sideburns clamoured everywhere! We don't need God either, we want a new world! Throw away your weapons, for only the priests and the officers, paid specifically for it, only they wish to lengthen the war!”<sup>40</sup> Fr. Dăncilă captured the essence of the Bolshevik message propagated by the followers of Lenin and Kun, writing the following

“Above all, they wanted internationalisation, hence, the separation of the Romanians from the holy land of their country, the ground soaked with the blood and the suffering of their ancestors, the land defended with so much bravery and over the course of so many centuries by our glorious nation.”<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, the military chaplain understood that if the enemy wanted to „destroy the Romanians' love for their country,“ then they had to „strengthen this love,“ fortifying it through every possible means.<sup>42</sup>

Confronted with this Bolshevik dialectics, the strategy of Fr. Dăncilă was a well-thought out one, focused on the national sensitivities of the soldiers and on their strong connections with the motherland. He appealed to these feelings at some key moments of the campaign, such as their presence on the „historical plain of Turda, next to the grave of the martyr prince,“ Michael the Brave. Here, Ioan Dăncilă describes a memorable moment, which is identical with the one illustrated by Liviu Rebreanu in volume I, „The Voice of the Earth“ of his celebrated novel, „Ion,“ namely, the soldiers' kissing of the earth, just like the peasant Ion al Glanetaşului in the Năsăud village of Pripas

“In a gentle sunset, I urged them to kiss the country's earth, in a gesture of faith that sanctioned the union of our soul with the holy ground of Michael the martyr's blood. Only then and there did we all feel, for the first time in our lives, the blessing of all the martyrs who lie in the bosom of the Romanian land, for whose defence we were preparing at that time, priests and soldiers alike.”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 115.

<sup>40</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 122.

<sup>41</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 120.

<sup>42</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 120.

<sup>43</sup> Dăncilă 1925, 120–121.

The second direction of Fr. Dăncilă's actions was the complete replacement of the Transylvanian soldiers' loyalty towards the Habsburg dynasty with loyalty for the Romanian dynasty, Ferdinand and Maria, the „King and Queen of our dreams,” who travelled through Transylvania showing their most noble feelings towards the values of the Romanian nation, as no Habsburg had ever done

“When I described to my soldiers the hora in Câmpeni and the dinner in Alba-Iulia, where the King and Queen had danced and dined with the people, when I told them about the King and Queen hugging the elders and the children of Transylvania, when I painted to them, in parallel with these scenes, the betrayals of the Habsburgs against Horia and Iancu, I believe that, from that moment on, anyone who would have dared to utter a single word against our dynasty was doomed to perdition. For three days in a row, I spoke to my soldiers about nothing but the glorious war commanded by His Majesty the King, the sufferings of the reigning House during the war, the pain alleviated by our August Queen and their permanent help to the disabled, orphans and widows. When, at the end of my counsel, I invited all of them to cheer for our king and queen, I remember, there was such excitement and frenzy that all the streets around the high school in whose yard we had gathered filled with people who were curious to see what was the cause of all that endless cheering, voiced by sincere soldiers, yearning to defend the throne and the dynasty, whatever the circumstances.”<sup>44</sup>

The texts of Fr. Ioan Dăncilă concerning the campaign of the Romanian Army in Hungary, which culminated in the overthrow of the Bolshevik government and the removal of the danger of communism in Central Europe, complete the picture of the Romanian military campaign, illustrating, at the same time, the multifaceted mission assumed by the chaplain in the Romanian regiments in the period between World War I and the struggle for the defense of Greater Romania, birthed by the democratic decisions reached in Chişinău, Cernăuţi and Alba Iulia.

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**Figure no. 1:** Fr. Captain Ioan Dăncilă, November 10, 1916, Rifenberg-Germany, Personal Collection of Aurel Pentelescu, Bucharest (Courtesy of Aurel Pentelescu).





**Figure no. 2:** Captain Ioan Dăncilă, army chaplain, carrying out mass on the front of Galicia, Easter, April 11, 1916, Personal Collection of Aurel Pentelescu, Bucharest (Courtesy of Aurel Pentelescu).





## THREE YEARS OF WAR (1916-1919). PAGES FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN OFFICER MARIAN POPU

OVIDIU MUNTEAN<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Marian Popu was born in the village of Diviciorii Mici, in Solnoc-Dabâca County, in 1889. He came from a Romanian family of intellectuals. After attending middle and high school in Gherla, in 1909 he enrolled in the „Ludovica“ Honvéd Military Academy in Budapest, from which he graduated in 1912, obtaining the rank of second lieutenant. At the outbreak of World War I, he was incorporated into the Honvéd Infantry Regiment no. 32 of Dej and advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Major. A career officer, Marian Popu was decorated several times in the war, when he served in the Hungarian army on the Galician front and then on the Italian Front. In the autumn of 1918, witnessing the collapse of the Monarchy and its army, he returned by train to Dej and put himself in the service of national ideals. To that end, in December 1918, he was part of the command structures of the Romanian National Guard in Dej and then served in the Romanian Army, being assigned to the Intelligence Office of the Sixth and Seventh Divisions. He was commander of the Cluj railway station and he was later entrusted with guarding and censorship missions at the Central Post Office in the city. In early 1919 he participated in the establishment of Infantry Regiments no. 83 and 99 of the Romanian Army, being sent to the Western Front, where he took part in the fighting against the Bolshevik regime in Hungary.

**Keywords:** World War I, memoir, Galician front, Brusilov Offensive, Italian front, the 1919 war against Hungary

**Rezumat:** Marian Popu s-a născut în anul 1889 în satul Diviciorii Mici din comitatul Solnoc-Dăbâca și provenea dintr-o familie românească de intelectuali. După ce a urmat cursurile gimnaziale și liceale la Gherla, în anul 1909 s-a înscris la Academia militară de honvezi „Ludovica“ din Budapesta, pe care a absolvit-o în anul 1912 obținând gradul de sublocotenent. La izbucnirea Primului Război Mondial a fost încorporat în Regimentul de infanterie nr. 32 honvezi din Dej și avansat la gradul de locotenent-major. Ofițer de carieră, Marian Popu fost decorat de mai multe ori în război, perioadă în care a luptat în armata ungară pe frontul din Galiția și apoi pe frontul italian. În toamna anului 1918, martor al colapsului Monarhiei și a armatei sale, s-a reîntors cu trenul în Dej și s-a pus în slujba idealurilor naționale. În acest sens, în decembrie 1918, a făcut parte din structurile de comandă ale Gărzii Naționale Române din Dej și apoi a activat în armata română în cadrul Biroului de informații al Diviziei a VI-a și a VII-a. A fost comandant al gării din Cluj iar ulterior a fost însărcinat cu paza și cenzura Poștei centrale din oraș. La începutul anului 1919 a participat la înființarea Regimentelor de infanterie nr. 83 și 99 ale armatei române, fiind trimis pe frontul de vest unde a luat parte la luptele împotriva regimului bolșevic din Ungaria.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Primul Război Mondial, memorialistică, frontul din Galiția, ofensiva Brusilov, frontul italian, războiul împotriva Ungariei din 1919.

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In a continuing effort to restore manuscript documents for publication, such as war memoirs or diaries from the front, written by the Romanian soldiers who fought in the Great War,<sup>2</sup> we shall focus, in this study, on the memoirs of Lieutenant Marian Popu. These memoirs recount the events in which the author was involved after the onset of the Brusilov offensive on the front in Galicia (June 1916) and until his return to the country, after having participated in the offensive of the Romanian Army against Communist Hungary, led by Béla Kun (1919).

In what follows, based on the autobiographical notes published in the *Annex*, on personal documents, patents, administrative documents, war diaries and medals from the modern history collection of the Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei in Cluj-Napoca,<sup>3</sup> we have reconstructed some biographical landmarks of the Romanian officer from the period of the war and the Great Union of 1918. With foresight, we can say that his path was exemplary and was often identical with the fates of the tens of thousands of Transylvanian Romanians who were fortunate enough to survive this tragedy that devastated the world more than a century ago and who, in challenging circumstances, returned to their homeland in the last months of 1918. His autobiographical notes, partially published in the *Annex*, were written later and refer to how the Great War left its mark on his career and personal life. They bear witness to the human experience of the Romanian officer on the front line, or outside it, and follow his destiny, his journeys from the trenches in the front line of Galicia to the military hospitals in Vienna, Dej, Cluj and Tășnad, where he was treated when he was gravely ill, in the autumn of 1914, and when he was wounded, twice, in 1915 and 1916.

Marian Popu was born in the village of Diviciorii Mici, located near Gherla, on 19 September 1889 and came from a Romanian family of intellectuals. His father, Vasile Popu, was an elementary school teacher and was active in the Association of Greek-Catholic Teachers around Gherla. The student Marian Popu attended secondary and high school in Gherla, from which he graduated in 1909 with a Baccalaureate diploma. In the same year he enrolled in the „Ludovica“ Honvéd Military Academy in Budapest and attended its courses for three years. In August 1912 he graduated from military school, being advanced to the rank of second lieutenant in the 1912 graduation ceremony of the class of active officers. He was originally assigned to Deva and, considering that in 1913 new Honvéd military units were established, including the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dej Infantry Regiment, he took this opportunity and asked to be transferred closer to home. The new infantry regiment in Dej had in its composition three battalions with recruitment areas in Dej, Bistrița, and Zalău. The command of this military unit was stationed in Dej and Lieutenant Marian Popu was incorporated as commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Company / the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of Dej.

In 1914, at the outbreak of the war, he was 25 years old. He was advanced to the rank of major lieutenant, being initially appointed officer in charge of the assignment of reservists who were to be mobilized in the war to the recruitment centres established in Dej, Bistrița,

<sup>2</sup> Muntean 2015, 149–189; Muntean 2018 a, 199–211.

<sup>3</sup> Some of Marian Popu's documents and personal items were exhibited for the first time during the temporary exhibition *Remembering the Great War. 1914–2014*, which was opened at the museum's headquarters on 27 June 2014, and were published in the exhibition catalogue. See Muntean, Mitu 2014, 42–49, 74–76, 84–85.

and Zalău.<sup>4</sup> Then, on August 18, 1914, Lt. Maj. Marian Popu was mobilized at the head of his subunit in Galicia, ending up directly on the front line. There he experienced, from the very beginning, the sordid reality of war and faced all its horrors (death, cold, hunger, squalor, exhaustion). He described those ordeals in his diary. Until the summer of 1916, Lt. Maj. Marian Popu reached the frontlines of Galicia three times, each and every time after a period of convalescence due to an illness, in the autumn of the year 1914 (followed by his evacuation to a military hospital in Vienna), and due to his being wounded in battle, in May 1915 and in July 1916.

In the spring of 1916, he was, together with the company he was leading, on the fortified battle positions in Doroshov Forest, south of Zalisicyki (Ukraine), on the bank of the Dniester, at a „distance of 1,500 steps from the Russian line”

“We also built shelters against the Russian artillery’s bombardment at a depth of seven meters under the ground. In front of the position, on the whole front of the brigade, a band of barbed wire obstacles was built, and in the middle of this band sat the obstacle in which high voltage electric current was circulating. We prepared for the stabilization war, improving and completing the position; this operation was done from October 1915 to June 1916, until Brussilov’s offensive,<sup>5</sup> the Russian offensive, was launched. We had attrition confrontations throughout the time mentioned above.”

After the general attack of the Tsarist Army was launched, the unit led by the Romanian officer withdrew precipitously, with great losses, on an itinerary that he recorded in his diary and on a map (Figure no. 1). During this general withdrawal, on 1 July 1916, Lt. Maj. Marian Popu was shot in the right arm in Rungory (Galicia) and was immediately evacuated from the front, to a military hospital in Cluj.

The frontline did not necessarily mean an ongoing, ceaseless confrontation, on the contrary, in the conditions of manoeuvre warfare, battles alternated with occasional periods of calm, which often lasted for months on end. It seems that the Romanian officer took advantage of this apparent cessation of fighting in his sector. In February 1916, he got a two-week leave and came home to Dej. Without insisting on this period, it is worth mentioning that despite all the hardships caused by the progress of the war, the Romanian officer managed to get married in August 1916. In order to fulfil all the necessary formalities, during his leave of February 1916, he paid the marriage bail according to the regulations in force,<sup>6</sup> and then the Royal Ministry of Defence approved his marriage to his fiancée, Katalin Kovásnai (Figure no. 2). For his courage, under the patent issued in Vienna on 24

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth mentioning that, at the same time, the soldier Mihai But from the Dej 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment was mobilized at the Recruitment Center in Zalău. We have published his *Journal*, containing his memoirs of the war and of his captivity in Siberia (see Muntean 2015, 149–189).

<sup>5</sup> The offensive led by Russian General Alexei Brusilov began on 4 June 1916 and represented a brave blow against positions occupied by the Austro-Hungarian army on a front of c. 300 km. At the end of the fighting, in September 1916, the armies of the Central Powers were pushed back 90 km, with enormous human and material losses for both warring camps.

<sup>6</sup> Deák 2009, 169–173.

August 1916, he was awarded the Imperial Merit Cross, Class III, with the insignia of war (Figures no. 3–4).

However, a few days after this event took place, the Romanian army entered Transylvania, on the night of 27/28 August, 1916, with the outbreak of hostilities between Romania and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, in order to remove them from Transylvania, several Romanian officers, including Marian Popu, were immediately transferred to Trenčín (Slovakia) and assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Honvéd Regiment where, says the author, „there was a Slovak regiment and I could not speak to anyone because I could not speak their language.”

From this moment, having been wounded in both arms, the Romanian officer was no longer sent to the front line and was entrusted with the command of an Infantry Training Battalion for reservists who were dispatched successively to the front (February 1917). Then he was advanced to the rank of Captain (Figure no. 5). Marian Popu remained until June 1918 at the training centre of the „Russ“ Detachment (74<sup>th</sup> Honvéd Division). This detachment was under the direct command of Colonel Aurél Stromfeld and was active in the village of Száldobos (today Steblivka-Ukraine) and in the Hust region.

Thus, when he was sent to the Italian front in the summer of 1918, Captain Marian Popu had a first-hand experience on the battlefield, having fought in the Great War for almost four years, with all the suffering and deprivation that it entailed: his long-term removal from his family, the increasingly precarious food and hygienic conditions on the front line, the permanent danger of death, the injuries suffered and his experience in the military hospitals where he had been treated, the traumas he had suffered because of the new types of weaponry used (the bombings undertaken by the military aviation,<sup>7</sup> the flame throwers, the nerve paralysing and asphyxiating toxic gases, bolt action firearms), etc.

Captain Marian Popu recalled that the moving of his unit to the Italian Front was due to the „truce with the Russians.”<sup>8</sup> He was therefore entrusted with the command of a fully equipped battalion that was loaded onto a military train bound for Austria. Since a rumour had been launched regarding the rebellion of a military unit in Budapest (the sedentary part of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dej Infantry Regiment), the train by which he was travelling was stopped at Szolnok station and pulled on a secondary line. The officer stayed there for six days and was mainly concerned with raising the morale of his soldiers but, as he passed through Budapest, he found out that some soldiers had deserted and left the train that was going to take them to the Italian Front. The disaster of war for the civilian population retained his attention when his train passed slowly through the outskirts of Vienna, where he saw children and women „running after the train, asking for bread.” In the railway node from the Austrian town of St. Johann in Tyrol, the Romanian officer handed over the battalion he had accompanied and, together with his staff, he established headquarters in the neighbouring village, Ellmau, where he continued to train the reservists who had been sent to the Italian Front.

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<sup>7</sup> Marian Popu recalled the air attack on the afternoon of September 24, 1915 when Russian military aircraft bombed the positions of his company, located west of the Dniester.

<sup>8</sup> It was the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, signed between Bolshevik Russia and the Central Powers on 3 March 1918, which enshrined Russia's exit from World War I.

In the autumn of 1918, the days of the two-headed Monarchy and its army were numbered. More and more military refused to obey orders from superiors. Anarchy was gradually installed and the civilian population revolted in the major cities of Austria and Hungary. Although he had a mission to train recruits, on September 30, 1918, Captain Marian Popu's unit was sent all the way to Salzburg to appease the city's revolting population. There the Romanian officer learned of the precarious situation on the Balkan Front caused by the surrender of Bulgaria (29 September) and the rapid advance of the French troops towards Serbia and Hungary.

After completing his mission in the city of Salzburg, in mid-October 1918 he returned to his headquarters in Ellmau, where he soon witnessed the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Army, meeting anarchy everywhere and „groups of soldiers singing and walking in the streets without weapons.“ Shortly after the end of the truce at Villa Giusti (3 November 1918), which ended the war on the Italian Front, in order to avoid the massive „exodus“ of soldiers coming by train from this front, Captain Marian Popu proposed to quickly form two trains necessary for the repatriation of his soldiers. The two trains were formed in the train station of St. Johann in Tyrol. The soldiers and military equipment were boarded and they left for Hungary. Along the way, in all the Austrian train stations they transited (Saalfelden am Steinernen Meer, Bischofshofen, Bruck an der Mur), the Romanian officer noticed that the famished civilian population had devastated and looted the trains carrying food packages to the front lines. Part of the war material on the train was seized by Austrian military authorities in Graz but, despite this incident, the train arrived safely at the Budapest train station, while the soldiers gradually left the train after entering Hungary.

At the end of November 1918, in Budapest, among the thousands of Transylvanian Romanians returning from all corners of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, was Captain Marian Popu of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment (Honvéd) Dej, along with his wife, Katalin, and their one-and-a-half-year-old daughter. As mentioned above, Captain Marian Popu had come to the Hungarian capital by train, directly from the Italian Front, after the collapse of the Dualist Monarchy and the end of the war, and his family had arrived here coming from the city of Trenčín (Slovakia). For two weeks, in the eastern railway station of Budapest, the Romanian officer sought a seat in one of the trains packed with people that were going to Cluj, to take his wife and daughter home and put them to shelter in those troubled times in late 1918. Eventually, after a long wait, they found seats in a windowless wagon and, in those bad conditions, Marian Popu's family arrived in Cluj, and then in Dej, in mid-December 1918

“The whole capital of Hungary was on the move. I didn't notice signs of disorder. Those who were on the move were mainly former prisoners looking for stations and trains, for the possibility of returning to their country: the Russians to the east, the Serbs to the south, the Italians to the west. I went to the east station every day to try to get back to Transylvania. After two weeks, I found a seat in a windowless wagon in which, together with my wife and little girl, who were with me, I travelled all the way to Cluj, then to Dej, where the sedentary part of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Honvéd Regiment was, the officers having arrived in Dej before me.”



In mid-December 1918, against the background of the disaggregation of the Imperial-Royal Army, Captain Marian Popu returned home, initially to the town of Dej. There he placed himself in the service of the Romanian National Guard, which entrusted him with various missions, and then travelled to the Slovak town of Trenčín (Figure no. 6–8). Earlier, the news of the Great Union of Alba-Iulia, on December 1, 1918, had been celebrated in Dej with great joy. The National Romanian Guard of Dej entered the Greek-Catholic Church, with the tricolour flag, which was consecrated by Fr. George Mânzat. Subsequently, the Romanians gathered in the central square, where other festivities were held. The Hungarian Army left Dej on the night of 19/20 December, 1918, and on December 21, the vanguard of the Seventh Infantry Division of the Romanian Army entered the town, being received with great enthusiasm by the Romanian population.<sup>9</sup>

Marian Popu's notes show that he came to Cluj before the Romanian Army entered the city (December 24, 1918) and witnessed the enthusiastic reception offered by the Romanians to the soldiers of the Seventh Infantry Division commanded by Generals Constantin Neculcea and Anton Gherescu: „On 24 December 1918, before dinner, units of the Romanian Army entered Cluj, where they were received by the population in Union Square, in front of the Statue of King Matthias Corvinus. It was the Seventh Romanian Division.”

The first subunits of the Seventh Infantry Division, which had entered the city, coming from Apahida, were the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Dorobanți Regiments, the first two batteries of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery Roman Regiment, and the cavalry squadron of the division. Thus, on Tuesday, December 24, 1918, the Romanian Army entered Cluj, a historic moment of great resonance which ended the state of tension that had dominated life in the city during those tumultuous days after the National Assembly in Alba Iulia. The event was also recorded by Sidonia Docan, Secretary of the Romanian National Senate in Cluj, who wrote the following in her *Journal*<sup>10</sup> on that day

“Young and old, everyone is running to Matthias Square to welcome the Romanian Army in Cluj. Is this not a dream? [...] The entry of the army, headed by Generals Neculcea and Gherescu, with a martial appearance, produces an indescribable emotion. Men are crying, women are crying, children, too, all are shaken by a holy emotion. Then they dance a hora around the square, around Matthias.”

At the end of December 1918, Captain Marian Popu enlisted in the Romanian Army and was part of the Command of the Sixth and Seventh Infantry Divisions (Intelligence Office) which authorized him to move armed on their territory of jurisdiction and entrusted him with important missions. For a short period of time, he was appointed Commander of the train station in Cluj and then, from mid-January 1919, he was assigned the supervision of the censorship service at the Central Post Office in the city (Figure no. 9), where, he says, „I organized and executed the discipline and censorship of correspondence, newspapers, telephone, telegraph communications, etc., until February 15, 1919, when I set up the Transylvanian regiment.”

<sup>9</sup> Albinetz 2015, 63.

<sup>10</sup> The *Journal* of Sidonia Docan was published in Muntean 2018 b, 68–87.

Next, he also contributed to the organization of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment of Cluj, a unit that was integrated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and participated in the defence of the Great Union, after the outbreak of hostile ties with communist Hungary, in April 1919.<sup>11</sup> The war with Hungary determined the permanent reorganization of the Transylvanian troops and, in this respect, in Cluj, the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was founded. It belonged to the 20<sup>th</sup> Division of the Romanian Army, which was under General Mihai Darvari's command. Some of the troops of this newly established division were brought to the Tisa River to strategically cover the area between Csáp and Abádszalók.<sup>12</sup>

In this context, in June 1919, the Romanian officer was put in command of a subunit of the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in the town of Törökszentmiklós (on the banks of the Tisa River), where he was appointed commander of the garrison and immediately ensured that the power plants providing the power supply to the Military Command established here during the Battle of the Tisa River (20–26 July 1919) were put into operation. The Romanian officer also recalled that this locality had been visited by King Ferdinand on the eve of this battle.

After forcing and crossing the Tisa, the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment occupied the town of Szolnok. He was transferred to the city of Debrecen (December 1919) and then entrusted with guarding the Tisa River, in the Nyíregyháza region. The company of Captain Marian Popu had a guard sector along the river of approx. 30 km, located between the villages of Vencsellő and Kisvárdá, the command post having been installed in the village of Bertzel (today Tiszabercel Hungary). On February 25, 1920, with the general withdrawal of the Romanian Army from in Hungary,<sup>13</sup> the Romanian officer surrendered the administration of the village to the new Hungarian civil authorities, represented by Mayor Stefan Imre, and returned with his unit to the garrison in Cluj (Figure no. 10).

The journey of Romanian officer Marian Popu from dynastic to national loyalty was also the journey of tens of thousands of soldiers and officers from the former Austro-Hungarian Army. Once they were back in their native places, they put themselves unconditionally at the disposal of the new Romanian authorities, participated in the formation of the national guards and the removal of the old administration, and then, some of them joined the Royal Romanian Army, continuing their war against Hungary, in the spring and summer of 1919, and contributing, thus, to the overall effort of defending the Great Union consecrated in Alba Iulia on 1 December 1918. In the spring of 1920, after returning to the Cluj Garrison, Officer Marian Popu continued his military career, was awarded the War Memorial Cross and the „Victoria“ Medal and, exceptionally, was elevated, for his merits, to the rank of major, under a patent signed by King Ferdinand (Figures no. 11–16).

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<sup>11</sup> Kirițescu 1925, 409.

<sup>12</sup> Tutula 2012, 185–188.

<sup>13</sup> Kirițescu 1925, 500–502.

## Annex

### *The biography of Colonel Popu Marian, Cluj, [1945].*

\*

“[...] In the sector of my company, I had a cavalry platoon as a battalion reserve, under the command of a lieutenant. In front of the company, in the woods, I had a sentinel installed, to spare the company from surprise enemy attacks. In May 1916 time passed while we were harassed by the enemy. By the end of the month we had captured some Russians who were had been deployed in reconnaissance missions and provided with new equipment and weaponry. We were informed by them that they were preparing for the offensive. Indeed, on May 31 (on a Saturday afternoon), an intense artillery fire was unleashed.

Our regiment informed me that our Austrian artillery was firing on the squadrons of Russians to force them to launch the attack. This bombing lasted until Sunday evening, on June 1, 1916, when we were ordered to retreat, leaving behind our position, built during the winter. We occupied positions west of the Dupa creek, which flowed from north to south into the Dniester, at 3 km from the position deserted on the same evening (Sunday). By morning we had built temporary shelters and were waiting for the Russians to attack.

I had a sector up on a ridge between the Dniester and the Dupacreek, along which a road, from Zalesziesiky to Pradek, unfolded. On Monday morning, at dawn break, Lt. Col. Stromfeld came by car to the command post of my company, made a reconnaissance and then addressed me, saying, „You know, Popu, that it is very dangerous here?,” and he left. What was the situation like? To the south of our regiment, units of the 51<sup>st</sup> Honvéd Division had been pushed by the Russians west of the Dniester. The bridge head to the east of the Dniester had reduced, the right flank of our regiment drawing close to the Dniester, while the 51<sup>st</sup> Division was west of the Dniester. We remained in this position for six days. The Russians tried to attack our right flank, leaning against the Dniester, but they were stopped by our Austrian artillery, placed west of the Dniester. At the back of the front of my company was a farm, Muninov farm, from which we had brought some ploughs that we placed in front of my company across the road full of Russian armoured vehicles. In this position we had six casualties. On the sixth day, in the evening, we left in each company sector a group of soldiers to mark the ordinary front with gun shots, then we withdrew with all of our four battalions, marching in a column, under the shield of darkness, and crossed the bridge from Zalesziesiky to the west of the Dniester. There we spent the night – over 4000 people – in an old trench dug by the Turks. By morning, we were ordered to withdraw. The company retreated, along with the regiment, on the route, on the following dates and to the following locations: on 6, 7, 8, 9,10 June, to the town of Zarwha, on 11 June, to June to the villages Serafince, Tozefowka, Stefanowka, Serafince, Iasienow-Polny, Ghiszkow, Czeriatyn, on 11 June, to the village of Ohna, on 13 June to Balahorowka, on 14 June, via Obertyn, on 15 June, to Dzurkow and Hadrobant, from 14 to 20 June, via Obertyn. In Obertyn we were inspected by the commander of the Seventh Army, the general of the Pflanze-Balty Cavalry Division, and the regiment became the reserve of the Seventh Army.

From 21 to 24 June, we stayed in Jurko, from 25 to 26 in the evening, we stayed in Nobyler, then, on the same day, we passed through Zamnkme, crossing the Prut, Trojea, and on 27 June we arrived at Trasciamec while on 28 June we arrived at Solotwina and Tracz. On 29 June, we went through Korolowka, Mymin, and on 29 in the evening we passed through Rhunow.

On the morning of 29 June, the whole regiment arrived on a height where the regiment commander called us to order, leaving the men at rest. By the time we, the battalion and company commanders, had reached the hill top, Austrian soldiers of ours were retreating in disarray on the ridge in front of us. The Russians had advanced and crossed the ridge. The regiment commander gave the following order „Counterattack – direction: 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion!” it was to this battalion that my company belonged and the battalion commander had given the order of attack in the direction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, Lieutenant Popu.

After this, everyone went to their units and began the counterattack movement. My company was the first subunit to begin the attack. The company attacked on two lines of shooters, and each line had two platoons. After a heavy fire, we stopped the Russian line and stormed against them with the company.

In the first quarter of an hour, all four platoon commanders were wounded. I stayed at the company with a platoon leader. We crossed over the Russian line and those who were left alive surrendered, while I and my company continued our advance, crossing over the front ridge that the Russians had crossed towards us.

When we arrived on the ridge, on my right flank, a Russian company was advancing in a line of shooters towards our company, which was in a marching column. At that moment, Second Lieutenant Tritz arrived with the machine-gun section with which he had stopped the Russian advance. The company to my right had also deployed in a line of shooters and advanced across the Russian line. After lunch, I noticed that on my left flank, the Russians had driven back the neighbouring company and we had remained off-guard. I retreated with my company on the next slope behind me and gathered our fugitives from all the subunits that had dispersed. We formed two platoons of them and entrusted them to a lieutenant, ordering him to support our artillery battery until the last projectile was fired and then to retreat as well. We continued our retreat over another ridge and, in the evening, we reached a farm in the valley where I found the regiment commander. We spent the night there and continued our retreat at dawn.

Around 11 o'clock we made a stop with the retreating regiment. The resting place was next to a road and, as I was looking at the road, I noticed two Russian armoured cars. I informed the artillery battery, which fired a direct cannon, but missed them. So, the armoured vehicles retreated.

On 1 July 1916, we arrived in front of the village Rungory. There we installed surveillance posts. We lacked the manpower to build a continuous front, and we found that, because of the previous battles, we were left with only 23 out of 160 soldiers. In this position I walked along the line of the posts with the medical orderlies and the telephone operators. I was at the end of their line, about five steps away. The Russians hadn't shown up yet advancing. However, at one point, at the sound of a gun fire from their direction, a bullet passed by us. The second bullet went into my upper right arm and past my spine, the bullet coming from the flank. I took shelter immediately. I found that the wound was

not serious. The medical orderly dressed my wound and I went to the battalion doctor, who evacuated me to Cluj. I was admitted to the hospital in the Pasteur building, where I stayed for three weeks. After that I left for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, the sedentary part, in Tășnad, to the convalescence section. I was there when, on 16 August, Romania declared war on the Austrians. On the same day, I was ordered to leave with the 15<sup>th</sup> Honvéd Regiment for Trencsen, where I found three more Romanian officers who had been moved: Lt. Olariu, Second Lieutenant Miha and Second Lieutenant Munteanu. It was a regiment of Slovaks. I could not speak to anyone because I could not speak their language.

On August 2, 1916, I got married and moved my family to Trencsen. After a month of staying in Trencsen with the 15<sup>th</sup> Honvéd Regiment, the sedentary part, I was moved to the 20<sup>th</sup> Honvéd Regiment in Nagy Kanizsa, from where, after two weeks of training, I was sent to a marching battalion of the Seventh Army, in the region of Sighetul Marmăției (Maramureș). Here I was assigned as company commander to the Army Training Centre in the village of Herinese, in charge of the training battalion of the „Russ“ Detachment operating in Bukovina.

During the two weeks that I was in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Honvéd Regiment, the sedentary section, there was a rumour that on 29 June 1916, during the counteroffensive undertaken by the company, I had allegedly torn off my epaulettes and had thrown away the dragon from my bayonet, and, dressed like a soldier, had stormed with my company and fought toe to toe with the Russians, whom we had defeated. This rumour originated from the soldiers with whom, on the same day, I had carried out the counterattack. They were part of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Honvéd Regiment. Having been injured, they arrived at the unit before I was also moved to the sedentary part.

On February 2, 1917 I was appointed battalion commander, to the training battalion of the „Russ“ Detachment where I had the rank of Lieutenant [Major] and had a lieutenant as my adjutant. I received a captain's salary, and I also got a fully equipped service horse. I received the horse from an Army Centre in Sighetul Marmăției. In March 1917, we received the reserves of the 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Division of Hussars for infantry training. The division was in the Carpathians, around Cârlibaba in Bukovina. From the 9<sup>th</sup> Hussars Regiment Tg. Mureș, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hussars Debrecen, the 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars Regiment Oradea and the 5<sup>th</sup> Hussars Regiment Nyiregyhaza, a training centre was established, in May 1917, for infantry training in the village of Szoldobos (Maramureș) and we handed these subunits to that centre. I stayed with the training battalion of the „Russ“ Detachment. At the training centre of the Seventh Army, to which the battalion I commanded belonged, I prepared and executed the battle position, which crystallized at Verdun in France.

Every ten weeks, I sent freshly trained forces to the „Russ“ Detachment. I also practiced the battle of the existing assault battalions in the Austrian army. I witnessed drills with real (war) ammunition. Lieutenant Colonel Stromfeld was my divisional training group commander.

In this region (the Hust region, by the Tisa), we stayed with the training groups until June 1918 when, after the armistice with the Russians, we moved in Austria onto the Western Front, the Italian front.

Upon departing for Austria, I was assigned a fully equipped battalion, ready to go to the front, which I had to transport by train to Austria.



This assignment of mine was a sign of the trust the commanders had in me. Arriving at the Szolnok train station in Hungary, we were stopped for five days, as a rumour had spread that the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Romanian Army in Budapest, in the garrison (the sedentary part), had committed an act of rebellion, of disobedience. My train was pulled on a side line near Tisa, where I spent 5 days paying attention to the troop. Every day, in each wagon, I sent them a music band to entertain them, to distract them from bad thoughts, indiscipline (the music band consisted of twelve people and two cimbaloms).

After six days, we set off for Budapest and then crossed into Austria, but upon our departure from Szolnok, we closed the wagons on the outside so as to prevent the soldiers from deserting. However, in passing through Budapest, someone opened the last wagon from which soldiers who were from Szeged, Nyitra, etc. deserted. On our way through Vienna, on the outskirts, the train was going slowly. Children and women were running after the train, asking for bread. We reached St. Johann [in Tyrol], a village located on the Salzach River, where I handed over the battalion and, with my underlings, continued on foot to the village of Elmau, 10 km north of St. Johann, where we set up camp, waiting for new troops to train them.

We carried on training the soldiers and sending them to the front.

On 30 September 1918, I was ordered to meet six men at the St. Johann train station in Tyrol. I presented myself that same evening to the station, where I found a fully formed battalion and filled out its assignment with my officers. We boarded the battalion on the train and went to Salzburg, where, a few days before, there had been a rebellion of the population, and the soldiers from the sedentary section in the city had been unable to restore order. In the morning I arrived there, got off the train and introduced myself to the garrison commander, a brigadier general, then went to the provincial headquarters (Landes - Reghierung), where I installed the battalion, then took order measures, sent out patrols, installed posts. I stayed there for two weeks until order had been restored. During this time, we received news that the Bulgarians had surrendered to the French and the French were advancing towards Serbia and Hungary.

On October 15, 1918, after the spirits in the city had calmed down, I returned with the battalion to St. Johann in Tyrol, then went with my underlings to Elmau, where my headquarters were.

On November 1, 1918, in the morning, my adjunct lieutenant reported to me that there was a soldier in the village who had the emperor's emblem, on his cap, torn off. I gave orders and telephoned the training division in St. Johann, and from there I was told to let the soldier go. He was the batman of the commanding officer of the training battalion from the neighbouring village, Going. I immediately went to St. Johann, to the command of the training group, by carriage. As I passed through this village, I saw groups of soldiers singing and walking in the streets without weapons. Arriving at the command of the group, I found that the officers of the battalion of St. Johann and of the command group had gathered at the command headquarters. The deputy commanding officer was Captain Gabsovits. We discussed what we should do, as that same day an uprising had broken out in Austria-Hungary and fighting ceased on all fronts. Trains from the front to Hungary were packed with unarmed soldiers, hurrying towards the country.

Then I suggested we should take all the empty wagons from the trains going to the front, form trains, as many as necessary, load materials and people in them and leave before the exodus from the front reached us. We immediately took the necessary measures, helped by about 40 short-term youth and officers and formed two trains; we also boarded an artillery battery that was recovering in the village, and on the third day we left for Hungary.

Crossing the Alps in a train towed by four locomotives, we noticed, at the first larger station, Saalfelden, that the trains carrying packages and supplies to soldiers had already been devastated by the population, in the station. After a short stop, we continued our journey. At the next station, Bischofshofen, we encountered the same situation as above. The train station was full of soldiers without guns, returning from the Italian front. Trains were running regularly both to the front and to the country. From this station, our train was routed to the Austrian city of Graz and our next train was routed to Linz-Vienna. Before arriving in Graz, at the station of the Bruk Am-Mur railway, we found traces of the disorder caused by the civilian population, which had devastated several trains. We continued our journey to the station of the Graz Railway, where we found the station full of soldiers, without weapons, sailors from the Austrian Navy, from the Adriatic Sea (Pola, etc.). Machine guns had been installed on the roof of the train station.

In the station, armed Austrian officers were walking about to maintain order. At one point, an Austrian lieutenant came to our train and asked for half of all the materials we had brought with us to be surrendered, arguing that there was a convention between Austria and Hungary in this regard. I protested and refused to surrender them, since these were material brought from the front.

Not long afterwards, we put some guards on the last six wagons at the end of the train, under the command of a lieutenant, thirty of our men, to prevent the Austrians from taking the materials by force.

They used a trick, namely: they put a small locomotive at the end of the train and unfastened the six wagons, without us knowing about this operation. The train left and the car behind pushed the train forward. After a while, the small locomotive stopped and pulled the six wagons with the materials back to the big station, where the guards disarmed us, and sent it by tram to the railway station where our train had stopped after leaving Graz station.

We were notified by our soldiers at the end of the train that my wagons with materials had been taken. From this station, we protested by telephone to the military headquarters of the large train station, but two armed companies had come from the cadet school to intimidate us. We hadn't intended to cause disorder, and after the arrival of the lieutenant with the guard, we set off by train and arrived at the Hungarian border at the first stop, from whether the Austrian locomotive went back, and we continued our journey to Budapest, with a Hungarian locomotive. In the Hungarian train station of Szombathely, we handed over several of the materials brought with us and continued our way to Budapest, where we arrived in the city's triage station, Iosif. After entering Hungary, on the way from the border to Budapest, the soldiers who were from those regions got off in various regions and went home. At the arrival station, I ordered the soldier in charge of my horse to disembark it and the carriage, tied the horse to the trolley, and let him go home, too. We had horses and cattle with us on the train. They had to be fed until they were handed over to the authorities

in the station. Lieutenant Tzebe, a supply officer, asked me to help him hand over both the materials and the animals, which I did and, within three days, he handed over everything that was on the train.

The whole capital of Hungary was on the move. I didn't notice signs of disorder. Those who were on the move were mainly former prisoners looking for stations and trains, for the possibility of returning to their country: the Russians to the east, the Serbs to the south, the Italians to the west. I went to the east station every day to try to get back to Transylvania. After two weeks, I found a seat in a windowless wagon in which, together with my wife and little girl, who were with me, I travelled all the way to Cluj, then to Dej, where the sedentary part of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Honvéd Regiment was, the officers having arrived in Dej before me. I introduced myself to the regiment's commander, a colonel who was a General Staff officer, and after a few days of staying in Dej, on December 13, I asked for a leave of six weeks and came to Cluj. During the whole period of the revolution, nothing happened to me; no one bothered me with anything.

In Cluj I lived with my family at a sister-in-law's, on Bolyai Street. On 24 December 1918, before dinner, units of the Romanian Army entered Cluj, where they were received by the population in Union Square, in front of the Statue of King Matthias Corvinus. It was the Seventh Romanian Division.

On 27 December, I presented myself to the Command of the Romanian Division and was appointed commander of the train station in Cluj (I had the rank of captain). The Seventh Romanian Division left for Dej - Zalău after some time and the Sixth Romanian Division came to Cluj under the command of General Neculcea.<sup>14</sup> In this division I was entrusted with the command of the Cluj post office, where I organized and executed the discipline and censorship of correspondence, newspapers, telephone, telegraph communications, etc., until February 15, 1919, when I set up the Transylvanian regiment.

In Cluj I set up the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment.

In November 1918, until 13 December, order and discipline in the towns of Transylvania were maintained by the Romanian national guards, made up of soldiers and officers who had returned from the front. I belonged to the Dej National Guard and, in this position I took a leave to bring my furniture from Trenčsen (Slovakia), which was occupied by the Czech army at that time. I was welcomed very warmly and received all the help I needed from the military authorities so that I could transport my furniture to Cluj.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, a Romanian regiment, formed in Cluj on 15 February 1919, left for Hungary on Easter Day. I stayed with the sedentary part of the regiment, where I had 800 men in command for training.

On April 1, 1919, I organized, with Major Târziu, the 99<sup>th</sup> Regiment [as] the double of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, belonging to the 20th Division, which was based in Tg. Mureș. On April 1, delegates arrived, a group of Romanian officers, whom we assigned to the regiment. The commander was Lt. Colonel Rădulescu Toma.

We stayed in Cluj until June, when then we also left for Hungary, by train to Korczag station, where we alighted and continued on foot to Török Szent-Miklos. Here was General Mărdărescu, commander of the troops in Transylvania, and General Moșoiu, commander of a Romanian army group.

<sup>14</sup> The commander of the Sixth Infantry Division was Brigadier General Anton Holban.

I was sent to the Hungarian village of Szajol, on the river Tisa, where the Hungarian front was in contact with the Romanian front. I was there as reserve, with the company, for this line, where I stayed for 48 hours, after which I was ordered to constitute, with my company and another regiment company, the garrison of Török Szent - Miklos, where I was the commander of the market.

Within three days, with the help of specialists, we put the power plant of the town into operation, providing our military commands with electricity. It was around time our troops were crossing the Tisa, embarking on an offensive against Budapest. On the eve of the offensive, King Ferdinand came to the command of the troops in Török Szent - Miklos. After crossing the river Tisa, the 99<sup>th</sup> Regiment entered the town of Szolnok, west of the Tisa, where I had been stationed for some time, after which I was withdrawn to Kecskemet. Then the Tisa flowed through Szentes and by December 1919 we were installed in Debrecen, but after about three weeks our regiment was sent to Nyiregyhaza. The regiment was entrusted with guarding the Tisa river, with a front stretching from the Tisa - Beő to Kissvarada (also on the Tisa), for a length of 80 km. I had a sector with the company from Venesellő to Kissvarada, about 30 km. My command post was at Bertzel (on the Tisa).

In February 1920 we withdrew, simultaneously with the advance of the Hungarian troops, and then we returned to the garrison in Cluj [...].”

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### **Additional information regarding the events of 1918–1919 The attempt of Professor Apathi from the University of Cluj to form a Hungarian Governing Council in Cluj**

“Professor Apathi convened a Hungarian general assembly in Cluj to reclaim and try to organize a Hungarian governing council. The meeting took place in Union Square, on the northern side of St. Michael’s Church. After the meeting, he settled in the student hostel on Avram Iancu St. with his organization.<sup>15</sup> At one point, we received orders from the Sixth Romanian Division that, together with the Praetor of the Sixth Division, a major, we should search Apathi’s headquarters.

At the General Secretariat I found Secretary Kertes Hugo, Feldmann, son of the owner of the Gherla spirit factory, whom I had known since attending the state high school in Gherla. His younger brother was in the same class as me at the Hungarian high school in Gherla. I couldn’t find Professor Apathi there.

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<sup>15</sup> After the Great Assembly held in Alba Iulia on December 1, 1918, the Government of Budapest did not recognize the political-legal value of the Resolution of the Union and sought, at any cost, to counter the organizational activity of the Governing Council of Sibiu by establishing, in Cluj, a General Governmental Commissariat for Eastern Hungary. On December 8, 1918, Professor István Apáthy, who was also president of the Hungarian National Council in Transylvania, was appointed as its leader. On 22 December 1918, in the central square of Cluj, he organized the people’s assembly referred to here by Captain Marian Popu. The assembly was attended by several thousand people and was intended to be a counter-demonstration of the Assembly from Alba Iulia. During this protest of the Hungarian population, a motion read by Dr. Sándor Vincze (vice-president of the Hungarian Council in Cluj) was voted. It provided for the maintenance of the political and economic unity of historical Hungary and the non-recognition of the Alba Iulia resolution. See Muntean 2018 b, 41–42.

Secretary General Kertes, a Jew, protested, but we simulated a search in the offices, following which, a few days later, Apathi was arrested by the Romanian Army and sent to the prosecutor's office in Dej.<sup>16</sup>

The so-called Hungarian Governing Council, which was trying to establish itself in Cluj, was disbanded in early January 1919.”

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<sup>16</sup> The Romanian officer took part in the search carried out at the administrative headquarters of the General Commissariat headed by Professor Apáthy, before his arrest by the Romanian military authorities (15 January 1919). Commissioner General Apáthy was arrested after his involvement in the incident from Crișeni (near Zalău) was proved. This incident had resulted in the killing and wounding of soldiers from the Romanian Army, some of them having gone missing. See Grad 2010, 71–72.







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POPU MARIÁN m.kir.dési 32.honvéd gyalogezredbeli főhadnagy és özv.IMREH LÁSZLÓNÉ szül.:Kovácsnai Katalin urnő között kötendő házasságra nézve az innen 1916.évi márczius hó 24-én 88614/15-b-916. szám alatt megadott nősülési engedélyben kikötött házassági óvadék-tőke szabályszerű biztosítása kimutatva lévén,ezennel igazolom,hogy a házasságkötésnek többé e tekintetben akadály utjában nem áll.

Budapest,1916.évi augusztus hó 18-án.

A minister rendeletéből:

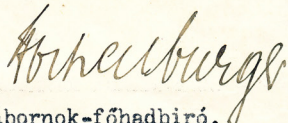
  
tábornok-főhadbíró.

Figure no. 2: Certificate of marriage approval, 18 August 1916, Collections of MNIT, M 7335.



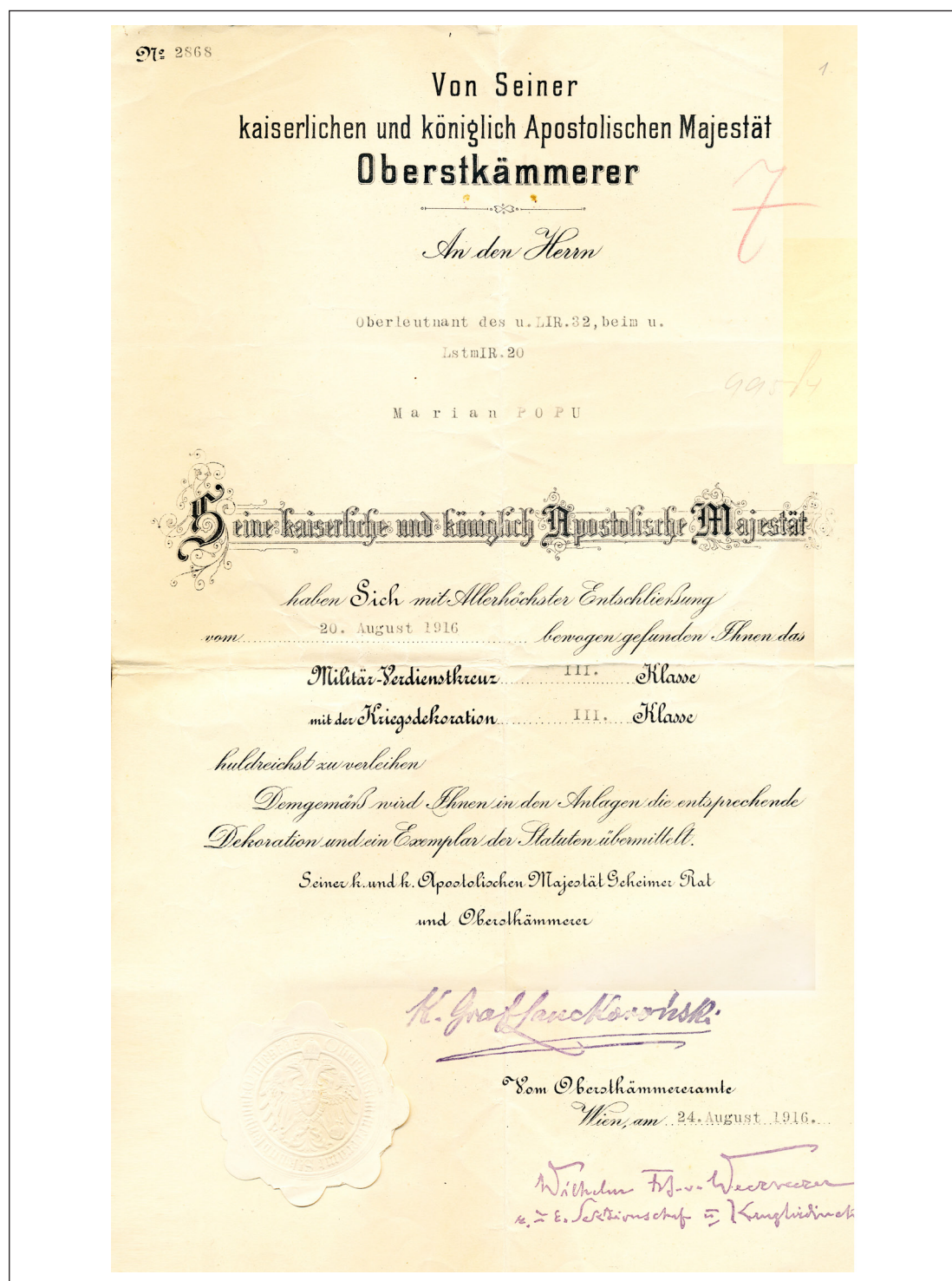
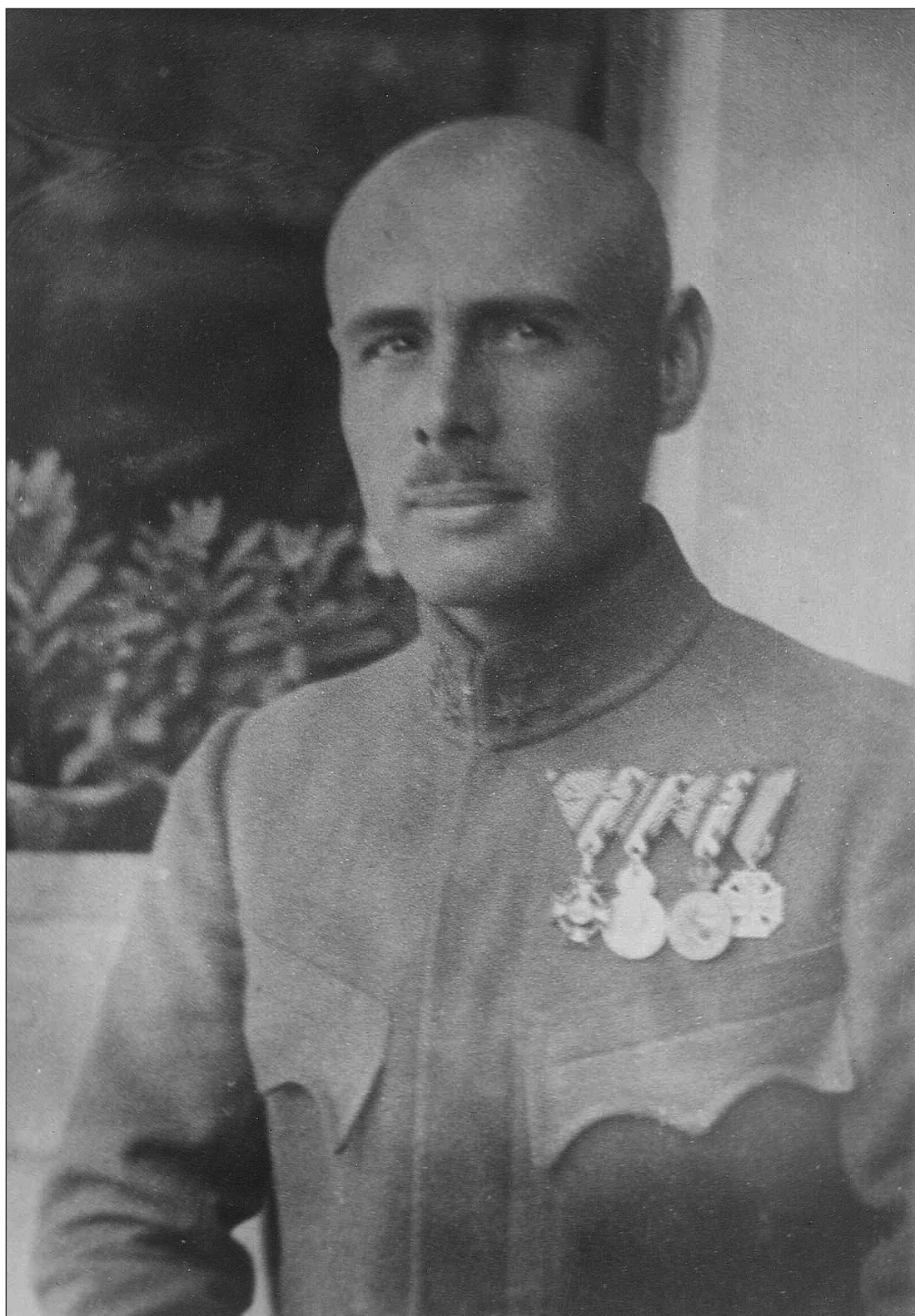


Figure no. 3: Patent for the Imperial Merit Cross, 24 August 1916, Collections of MNIT, M 7337.



**Figure no. 4:** Imperial Merit Cross with the insignia of war, Collections of MNIT, M 12645.





**Figure no. 5:** Photo of Captain Marian Popu, 1917, Collections of MNIT, C 3090.



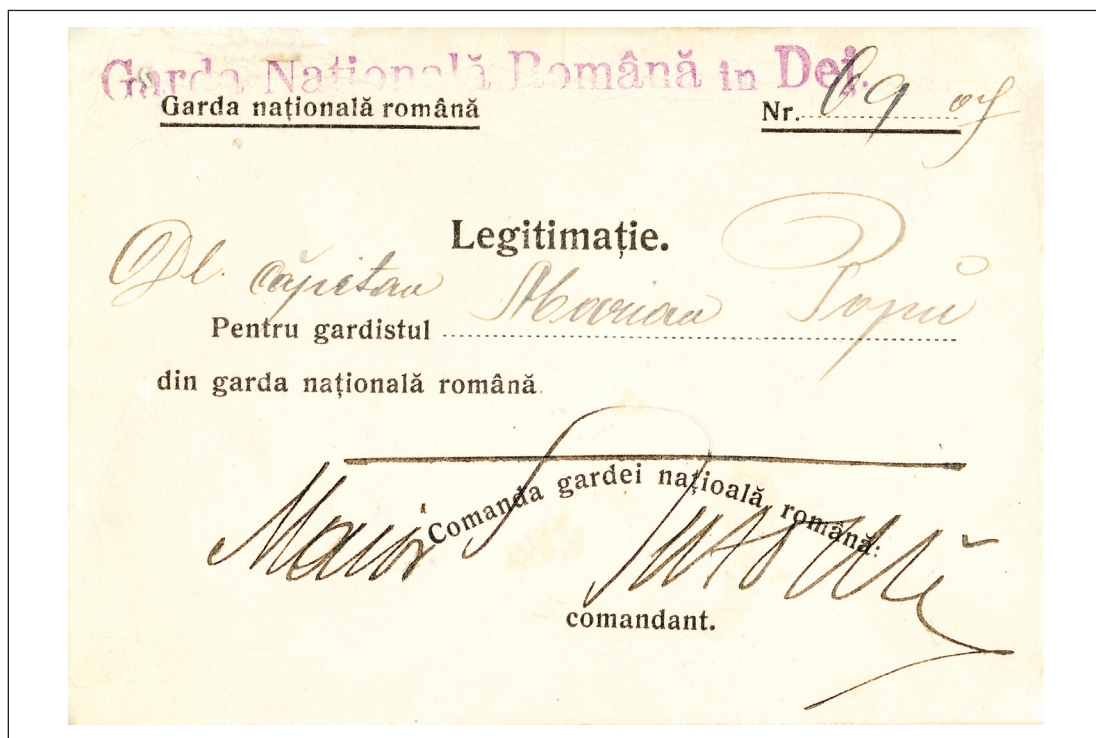


Figure no. 6: Badge of the Romanian National Guard in Dej, 1918, Collections of MNIT, M 7342.

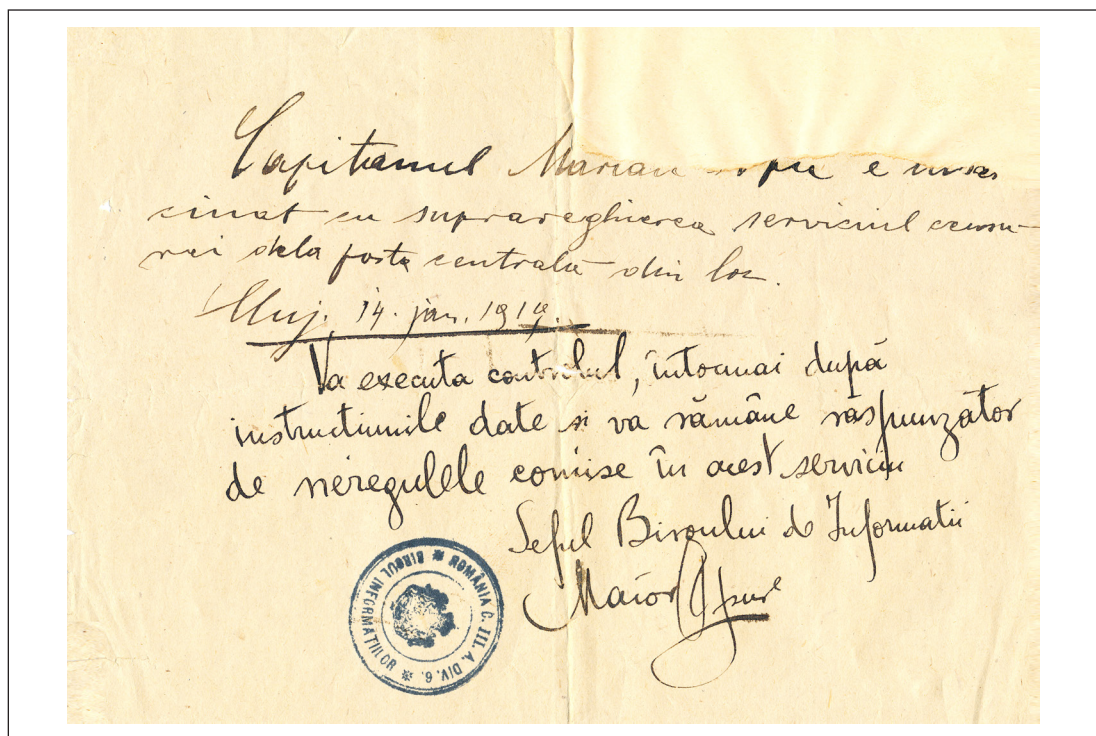


Figure no. 9: Service order, Cluj, 14 January 1919, Collections of MNIT, M 7348.

[illegible]

**Figure no. 7:** Travelling Order to Trenčín, 13 December 1918, Collections of MNIT, M 7343.



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Garda Națională Română în Dej.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Garda Națională Română în Dej.</p> <p>Nr. <u>20</u> / 191<u>8</u></p> <p>Bilet pe clasa <u>II</u> să cre-<br/>ditează.</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">Ordin deschis.</p> <p>Pentru <u>Capitan</u><br/><u>Marian Popu</u></p> <p>care din încredințarea susnumitei garde în<br/>cauză <u>oficiară</u><br/>călătorește din Dej până în <u>Sibiu</u><br/><u>Sibiu</u> și îndărăpt.</p> <p>Rugăm toate oficiile și autoritățile să<br/>binevoiască ai sta întru ajutor susnumitu-<br/>lui și să-l ajute în călătorie.</p> <p>Dej, la <u>29 Decembrie</u> 191<u>8</u></p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Garda Națională Română în Dej.</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">comandant.</p> <p>Subscrierea proprie a călătorului:<br/><u>Marian Popu</u><br/><u>capitan</u></p> <p>Ordinul deschis are valoare până la<br/>ziua <u>15 ianuarie</u> 191<u>9</u></p> <p><u>16 îndreptătit de a</u><br/><u>prorota nume</u></p> | <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Dési Román Nemzetőrség.</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Dési Román Nemzetőrség.</p> <p>Sz. <u>20</u> / 191<u>8</u></p> <p><u>II</u> osztályu menetjegy<br/>hitelezendő.</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">Nyílt parancs.</p> <p><u>Popu Marian</u><br/><u>kapitány</u></p> <p>részére, ki fenti parancsnokság engedélyé-<br/>vel <u>szolgálati</u> ügyben<br/>Désről <u>Szibiu, Vágassza</u> utazik.</p> <p>Felkéretnek az összes hatóságok, hogy<br/>fentnevezett utazásában támogatni szí-<br/>veskedjenek.</p> <p>Dés, 191<u>8</u> <u>December</u> hó <u>29</u> n.</p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Garda Națională Română în Dej.</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">parancsnok.</p> <p>A tulajdonos aláírása:<br/><u>Popu Marian ms.</u></p> <p>Ezen nyílt parancs érvényessége meg-<br/>szűnik 191<u>9</u> <u>január</u> hó <u>15</u> n.</p> <p><u>Fegyver viselése</u><br/><u>megengedett</u></p> <p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Garda Națională Română în Dej.</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Medgyesi Lajos Dés, 1918.</p> |
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**Figure no. 8:** Travelling Order for the Trenčín-Sibiu route, 29 December 1918, Collections of MNIT, M 7344.

## Proces Verbal.

Astăzi douăzeci și cinci Februarie anul unu mie nouă sute douăzeci. Noi Comandanțul postului de companie Căpitan Popu Marian din comuna Berczel la predare și Ștefan Iure primarul comunei Berczel la primirea comunei Berczel am procedat în modul următor.

- 1./ La predat și primit comuna Berczel în care în momentul predării s-a aflat cea mai mare ordine și liniște.
- 2./ La predat și primit tot mobilienul și materiale ce s-au luat pentru nevoile serviciului.
- 3./ Oara predării și primirii comunei s-a stabilit în ora 9

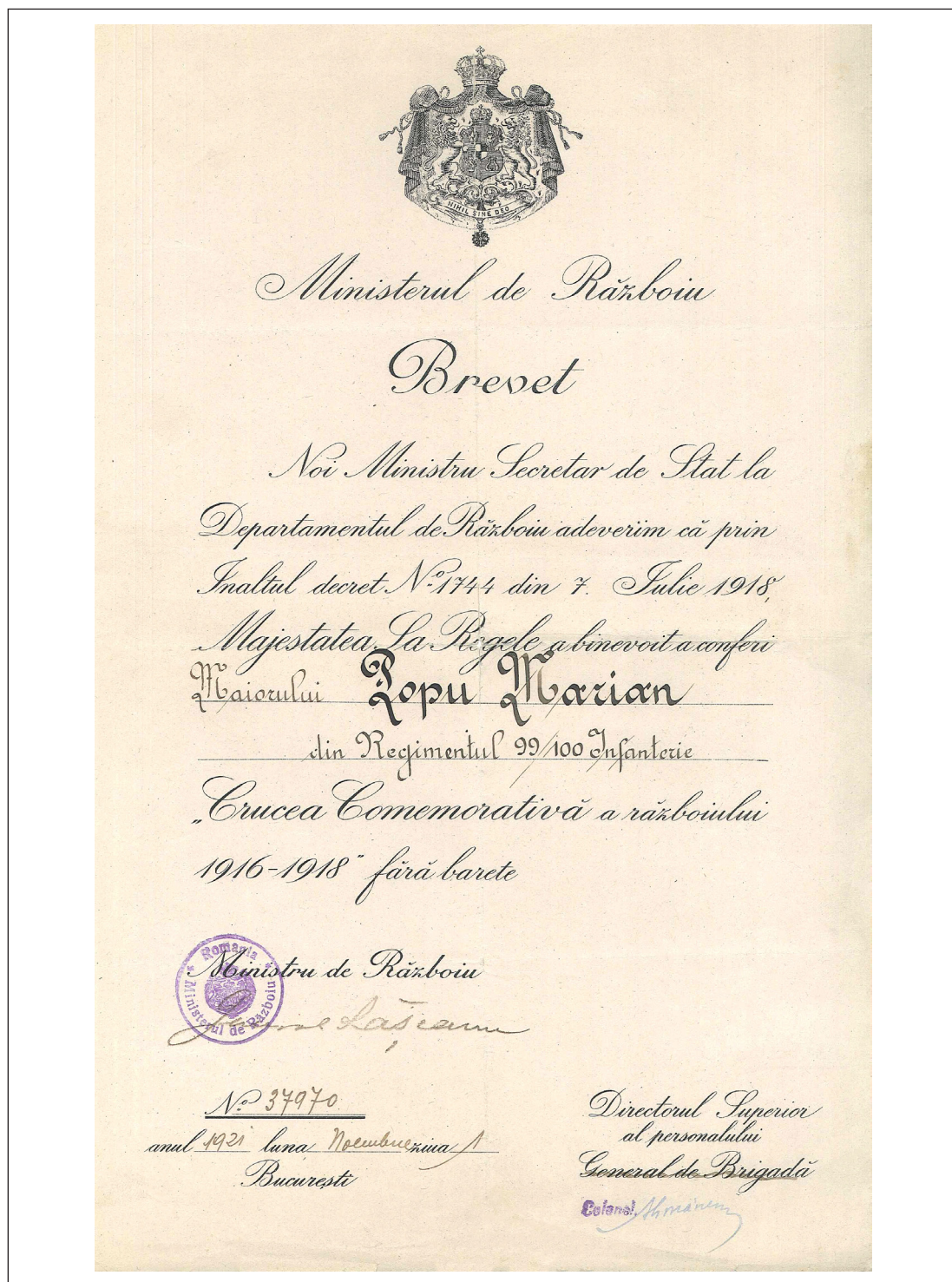
Pentru care s-a încheiat prezentul Proces Verbal în trei exemplare din care unul s-a predat primarului Berczel, unul s-a înaintat la Palatul Regal și unul s-a rămas la companie.

Am predat  
Comand. Comp. 6. a. / din Reg. 9. a. / Lt.  
Căpitan Popu

Am primit  
Primarul comunei Berczel  
Ștefan Iure  
Berczel

Figure no. 10: Official report of the handing-over/taking-over of Berczel (Hungary), 25 February 1920, Collections of MNIT, M 7349.





**Figure no. 11:** Patent of awarding the War Memorial Cross medal, 1 November 1921, Collections of MNIT, C 3120 a.





**Figure no. 12:** War Memorial Cross medal, Collections of MNIT, M 12655.

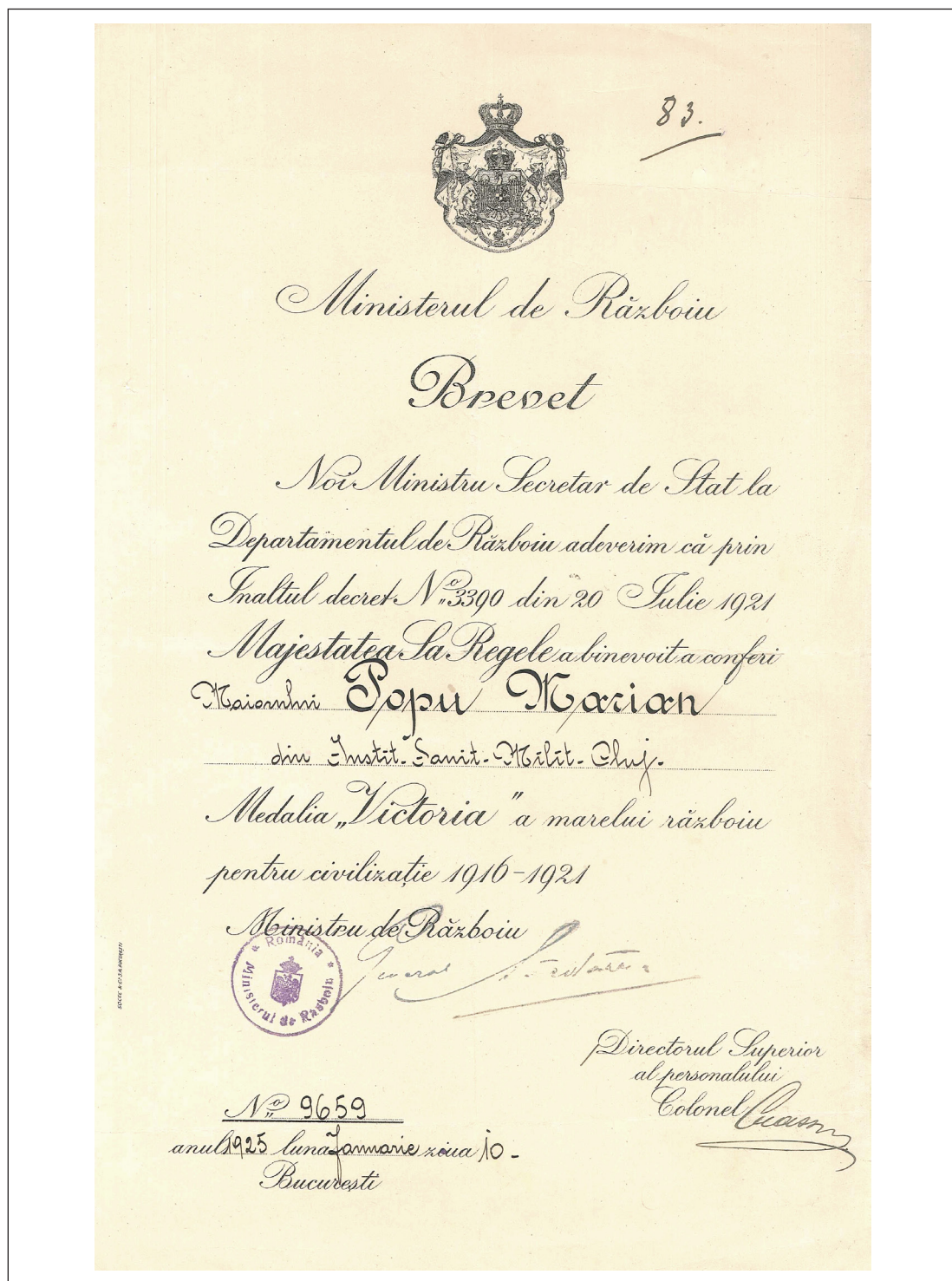
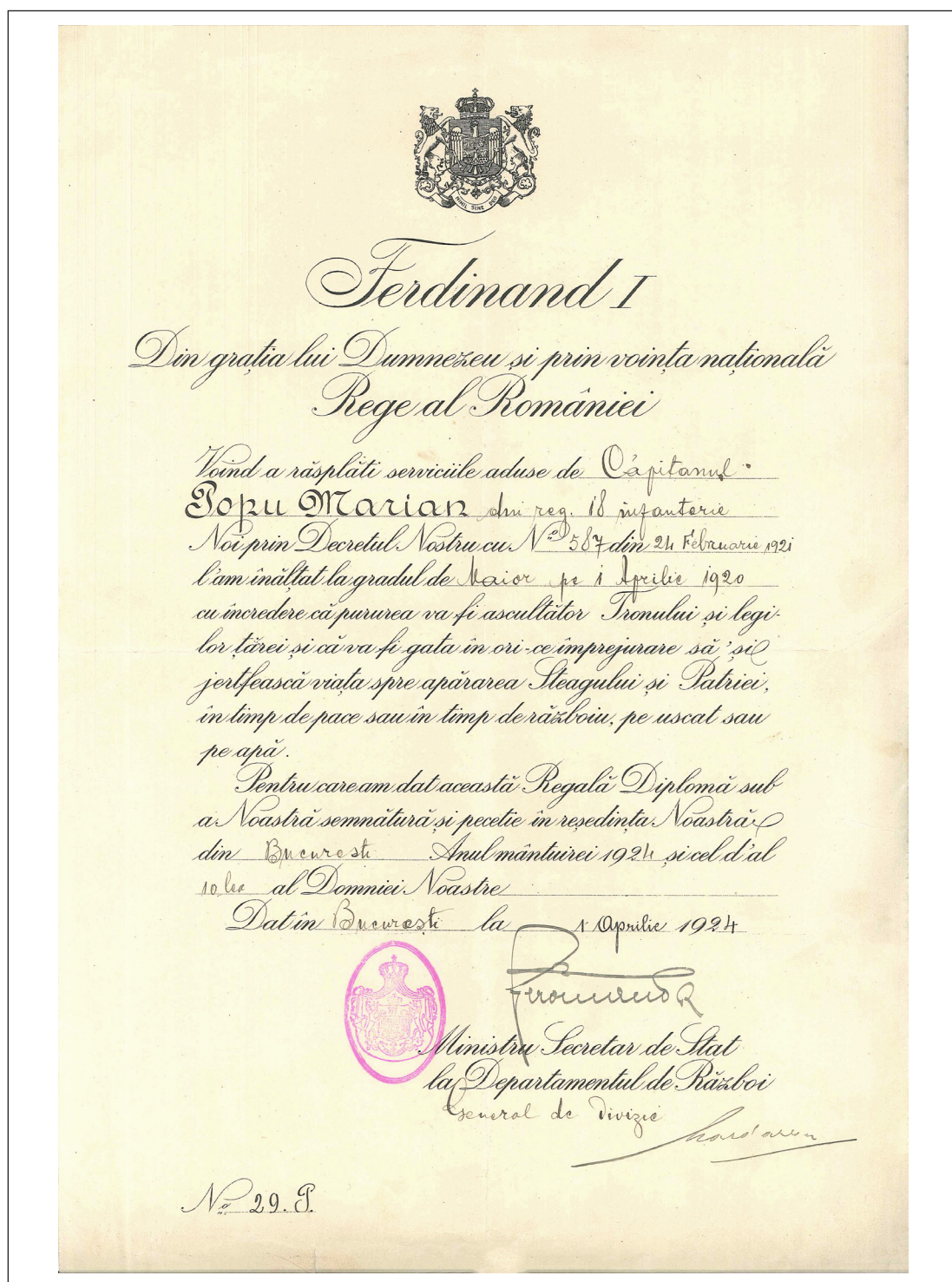


Figure no. 13: Patent of awarding the „Victoria” Medal, 10 January 1925, Collections of MNIT, C 3121 a.



**Figure no. 14:** The „Victoria“ Medal of the Great War for civilization 1916–1921, Collections of MNIT, M 12656.





**Figure no. 15:** Patent for promotion to the rank of Major signed by King Ferdinand, 1 April 1920, Collection of MNIT, C 3134.





**Figure no. 16:** Photo of Major Marian Popu, 1921, Collections of MNIT, C 3092.

**PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN  
BY THE BROTHERS KÁLMÁN DUNKY (1858-1935)  
AND FERENC DUNKY (CCA. 1860-CCA. 1941),  
INCLUDED IN THE PATRIMONY OF THE NATIONAL  
HISTORY MUSEUM OF TRANSYLVANIA**

MELINDA MITU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** this paper presents aspects of the life and work of **Kálmán** and **Ferenc Dunky**, who, together with the Ferenc Veress (1832–1916), a pioneer of photography in Transylvania, were the most important photographers of Cluj in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1886 Kálmán Dunky opened, together with his brother Ferenc, a photo studio in the centre of Cluj, in Central Square no. 11, that is, in the building owned by Countess Otília Wass. They are considered the founders of reportage photography, capturing in pictures numerous special events in the history of Cluj, such as the performances of the ballet ensemble of the Viennese Opera (1888), the visit of Emperor Franz Joseph to Cluj in 1895, or the unveiling of the statue of King Matthias Corvinus in 1902.

**Keywords:** Kálmán Dunky, Ferenc Dunky, Cluj, photographs, exhibition.

**Rezumat:** Articolul de față prezintă aspecte din viața și activitatea lui **Kálmán** și **Ferenc Dunky**, care, alături de Ferenc Veress (1832–1916), pionierul fotografiei din Transilvania, au fost cei mai importanți fotografi ai Clujului din a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea și primele decenii ale secolului al XX-lea. În anul 1886 Kálmán Dunky a deschis, împreună cu fratele său, Ferenc, un cabinet fotografic în centrul orașului Cluj, în Piața Centrală nr. 11, în imobilul deținut de contesa Otília Wass. Ei sunt considerați întemeietorii fotografiei de reportaj, fixând în imagini numeroase evenimente deosebite din istoria orașului Cluj, cum au fost spectacolele susținute de ansamblul de balet al Operei vieneze (1888), vizita împăratului Franz Joseph la Cluj, în 1895, sau dezvelirea statuii regelui Matia Corvinul, în 1902.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Kálmán Dunky, Ferenc Dunky, Cluj, fotografii, expoziție.

In the second edition of the exhibition project entitled *Great Photographers of Transylvania. The 19th–20th Centuries*, which continued into the second half of 2019,<sup>2</sup> Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei in Cluj-Napoca presented the brothers

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ildikó Melinda Mitu, museum curator IA at the Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei [The National History Museum of Transylvania] in Cluj-Napoca, hereafter abbreviated as MNIT (mitu\_meli@yahoo.com).

<sup>2</sup> The exhibition was organised by the Maramureș County Museum of History and Archaeology in Baia Mare, in collaboration with the Brukenthal National Museum in Sibiu, the National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca, the National Museum of the Union in Alba Iulia, the *Casa Mureșenilor* Museum in Brașov, the Satu Mare County Museum, the Museum of the City of Oradea – Cultural Complex, and the History Museum in Sighișoara. The vernissage of the exhibition took place on 9 October 2019, on the premises of the History Museum in Baia Mare.

**Kálmán and Ferenc Dunky**, who, together with Ferenc Veress (1832–1916), the pioneer of photography in Transylvania, were the most important photographers in Cluj in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some researchers claim that the Dunky brothers were initiated into the secrets of the profession by Veress himself, but we do not have direct information on this.<sup>3</sup>

The first data regarding the life and activity of the two photographer brothers in Cluj come from 1877 and are related to Kálmán Dunky, who was a member of the Industrialists' Association in Cluj. Later, in 1879, he took a photo that won an award at a specialized exhibition in Dej. In 1883, in an issue of the magazine *Fényképészeti Lapok*, edited by Ferenc Veress,<sup>4</sup> Kálmán Dunky was presented as a „photographer who has blazed new trails.“ He was active in Lugoj at the time.<sup>5</sup>

In 1886 Kálmán Dunky opened, together with his brother Ferenc, a photo studio in the centre of Cluj, in Central Square no. 11, that is, in the building owned by Countess Otília Wass.

In the capital of Transylvania, the Dunky brothers soon became the official photographers of the Transylvanian Carpathian Society.<sup>6</sup> Their portraits and landscapes were successfully displayed at various exhibitions. They are considered the founders of reportage photography, capturing in pictures numerous special events in the history of Cluj, such as the performances of the ballet ensemble of the Viennese Opera (1888), the visit of Emperor Franz Joseph to Cluj in 1895, or the unveiling of the statue of King Matthias Corvinus in 1902.<sup>7</sup>

The Dunky brothers also participated with their works in various exhibitions in the country and abroad. They distinguished themselves especially in the 1887 industrial exhibition of Dej (where they were awarded the Silver Medal), in the 1888 General Exhibition of Pécs (Gold Medal), in the Millennium Exhibition of 1896, where they obtained a Diploma of Merit, and in the 1897 Industrial Exhibition in London, where they won the Grand Prize and the Gold Medal.<sup>8</sup>

Among the outstanding photos of the Dunky brothers are those in which the two artists captured prominent representatives of Hungarian culture, such as the famous painter Mihály Munkácsy, who visited their studio in 1891, Mrs Zsigmond Gyarmathy, a well-known writer of the era, in 1889, or the world-renowned polymath from Cluj, Sámuel Brassai, in 1896.<sup>9</sup>

In 1898, the brothers Kálmán and Ferenc Dunky received the title of „Court photographers,“ a position that was highlighted on the reverse of the photos developed in

<sup>3</sup> The photographers Kálmán and Ferenc Dunky have been researched and written about by Miklósi Sikes 2001, 116–117.

<sup>4</sup> On the life and work of Ferenc Veress, see Miklósi Sikes, 2001, 51–64; 210–215; Sas 2014; Mitu 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Miklósi Sikes 2001, 117.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fotobarat3/4606040128/>; <https://csaladisi.ekekolozsvar.ro/hangay-oktav> (29 September 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Miklósi Sikes 2001, 117. The Dunky brothers' photographs were later used to edit postcards illustrated with the image of the statuary group made by János Fadrusz. On these aspects, see <https://www.maszol.ro/index.php/nagykep/116-matyas-a-kepeslapok-kiralya/> (29 September 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Miklósi Sikes 2001, 117.

<sup>9</sup> Miklósi Sikes 2001, 117.

their studios. The Dunky brothers' photos were printed on photographic paper made in Vienna. On the reverse side there were allegorical scenes or decorative motifs in a *Secession* style, with information about the titles and the accolades they had received for their work (for example, „Honorary Members of the Royal Academy *La Stella d'Italia*. Awarded with gold medals and other crosses of merit at exhibitions in London, Paris and others”),<sup>10</sup> as well as about the locations of their photo studios. In the early 1900s, the Dunky brothers opened workshops also in other cities of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, namely in Dej, Budapest, Miskolc, Sátoraljaújhely and Sáropatak.

The two photographer brothers also had special merits in rendering aspects related to the cinema screenings in Cluj from 1913–1918. In the studio founded by Jenő Janovics, the director of the theatre in this city, the two photographers were tasked to photograph sequences from films, working instruments, scenography and scenery. The photos were then displayed in the windows of cinemas. These images have now become all the more valuable as most of those films were destroyed during the two World Wars.<sup>11</sup>

\*

The Museum of History in Cluj does not hold many photographs taken by the brothers Kálmán and Ferenc Dunky, such valuable artefacts being kept in other museums or libraries in Romania and Hungary,<sup>12</sup> as well as in various private collections. The photos housed by Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei come from old donations made by Countess Ottília Wass and Count Géza Kuun to the Transylvanian Museum Association at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the descriptions on the reverse of the photos,<sup>13</sup> they captured especially members of some aristocratic families in Cluj: children or young girls from the Bánffy, Bethlen or Boér families, in romantic poses and settings. Thus, Zoltán Bánffy, as a child, was captured as „Cupid“ or playing a flute, in a setting that mimicked a natural background; Baronesses Elza and Alice Bánffy or Margit Boér appeared as angels, while Countess Vilma Bethlen was rendered in a dreamy posture, with flowers in her hair and on her dress.

All these theatrical compositions highlighted qualities such as naivety, purity and sincerity, values and attitudes appreciated by the elites of the time, especially when it came to the education of children and young girls.<sup>14</sup>

Other young aristocrats were positioned in exotic settings, among birds or lush plants, wearing dresses with rich prints (floral, Oriental) and numerous accessories and ornaments. Among these images is that of Jozefina Pálffy, in the costume of a Circassian woman.

<sup>10</sup> See the photos from the Collection of MNIT, with the following inventory numbers: M 4029, M 4031, M 4167.

<sup>11</sup> See Izsák Mária, the presentation text of *The Dunky Brothers and Film* exhibition. The event was organized in Miskolc (where it was another important studio of the two brothers), from 10 September to 27 November 2010, at the address <http://www.miskolcigaleria.hu/index.php?pid=10020> (29 September 2019) or Izsák 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Most of the photos of the Dunky brothers are kept at the museums in Miskolc and Budapest.

<sup>13</sup> The texts were drafted either by their initial owners (Ottília Wass), or by the curators of the Transylvanian Museum Association, who inventoried them. We must thank Mr. Gy. Dávid Gyula – who is the author of several volumes and articles about the Bánffy noble family and about the Castle in Bonțida – for the support he provided us with in identifying the members of the Bánffy family in the images analysed in this study.

<sup>14</sup> F. Dózsa 1989.



All these images denote the Transylvanian aristocrats' love of beauty, their predilection for classical literature and their fascination with the Orient.<sup>15</sup>

Other photos from the studio of the two brothers that are owned by the Museum of History in Cluj represent Etelka Hóry, who, after marriage, became Mrs Zsigmond Gyarmathy, a personality who was highly esteemed for her novels and ethnographic writings, or Count Géza Kuun (1838–1905), a historian, Orientalist, vice-president of the Academy of Sciences in Budapest, and the owner, as of 1868, of the famous castle in Mintia (Hunedoara county) of the Gyulay noble family.

All these photos presented in the above rows emphasize that, on the cusp of the 19th–20th centuries, Cluj could also boast being home to outstanding representatives of the photographic art.

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<sup>15</sup> This was also the time when Baron Orbán Balázs's travel stories to the East were published, as were those of Zichy Jenő to Russia and the Caucasus; Vojnich Oszkár in Subotița, travelled to Australia, New Zealand, China and the Philippines also around this time, his expeditions being followed with great interest in the press of the time.



**Figure no. 1:** Countesses Ilona and Vilma Bethlen (?), dressed as „Antigone and Ismene,” Collections of MNIT, M 4028.



**Figure no. 2:** Baroness Elza Bánffy (?), as an „angel,” 1898, Collections of MNIT, M 4029.



**Figure no. 3:** Baroness Elza Bánffy (?), as a „guardian angel,” 1898, Collections of MNIT, M 4031.



**Figure no. 4:** Margit Boér (?), as an „angel,” Collections of MNIT, M 4032.



**Figure no. 5:** Countess Vilma Bethlen (?), Collections of MNIT, M 4033.



**Figure no. 6:** Ilona Szathmáry (?), as an „angel”, Collections of MNIT, M 4034.



**Figure no. 7:** Baroness Alice Bánffy (?), as an „angel,” Collections of MNIT, M 4040.



**Figure no. 8:** Countess Vilma Bethlen (?), Collections of MNIT, M 4167.





**Figure no. 9:** Countess Emma Béldy (?), dressed as „Mariella,” Collection of MNIT, M 4035.



**Figure no. 10:** Baroness Emma Szentkereszty (?), dressed as „Lili,” Collection of MNIT, M 4036.



**Figure no. 11:** Róza Ugrom (?) as „Princess of Cyprus,” Collections of MNIT, M 4037.



**Figure no. 12:** Jozefin Pálffy (?), in a Circassian woman's suit, Collection of MNIT, M 4038.





**Figure no. 13:** Baron Zoltán Bánffy (?), Collections of MNIT, M 4030.



**Figure no. 14:** Baron Zoltánka Bánffy (?), as „Cupid,” Collections of MNIT, M 4039.



**Figure no. 15:** Count Géza Kuun, Collections of MNIT, M 4097.



**Figure no. 16:** Mrs Zsigmond Gyarmathy (Collection of MNIT, M 12254).



**Figure nr. 17:** The panel with reproductions after photos taken by the brothers Kálmán and Ferenc Dunky, with which the MNIT participated in the second edition of the exhibition *Great Photographers from Transylvania. The 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, housed by the Maramureș County Museum of History and Archaeology in Baia Mare, on 9 October 2019. The artistic display was conceived by Károly Török, curator IA in the MNIT.



## ALONE, AMONG ITS OWN: THE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TRANSYLVANIA BETWEEN 1918-1940

LUCIAN TURCU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This study presents the historical evolution of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church between the two World Wars. After World War I, the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church was forced to adapt to the new political, ideological and cultural context specific to Greater Romania. This study shows how the Greek-Catholic Church anchored itself in the legislation of the Romanian Kingdom after 1918. It analyses the need for an institutional restructuring of the Church and its new configuration as of 1930, outlining the educational challenges and the solutions the Church came up with, and making reference to ways of enhancing the spiritual life of the clergy and of the laity, the revitalisation of monastic life, the encouragement of religious and moralising publications, the building of places of worship and the idea of the ecclesiastical unity of the Romanian people.

**Keywords:** reorganisation, interconfessional competition, denominational schools, monastic orders, publications

**Rezumat:** Studiul de față prezintă evoluția istorică a Bisericii greco-catolice românești în intervalul cuprins între cele două războaie mondiale. După Primul Război Mondial, Biserica română unită a fost nevoită să se adapteze noului context politic, ideologic și cultural specific României Mari. Studiul prezintă modul în care s-a ancorat Biserica greco-catolică în legislația Regatului român după 1918. S-a analizat necesitatea restructurării instituționale a Bisericii și noua configurație în care ea a funcționat începând din 1930; s-au prezentat provocările de natură educațională și soluțiile pe care Biserica le-a identificat, nelipsind nici aspectele legate de dinamizarea vieții spirituale a preoților și credincioșilor, revitalizarea vieții monahale, impulsivarea publicațiilor cu caracter religios și moralizator, programul de edificare de lăcașuri de cult sau ideea unirii ecleziastice a românilor.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** reorganizare, concurență interconfesională, școli confesionale, ordine monahale, publicații

The Union of Transylvania with Romania opened new horizons for the Greek-Catholic Church. Part of the rich cultural-religious dowry that the last of the provinces which declared their union with the Romanian Kingdom in 1918 brought inside the new state, the Greek-Catholic Church optimistically approached the prospect of cohabitation with the „blood brothers.”<sup>2</sup> Its more distant or closer past justified it to adopt such an enthusiastic attitude. It was an institution which, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, had championed the implementation of the rights promised to the Romanians at the time when the religious union with the Church of Rome had been accomplished. Moreover, the access of the

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<sup>2</sup> Turcu 2016, 102–117.



Greek-Catholic clergy to the most prestigious institutions of learning and culture in Europe at that time allowed for the emergence of an elite that made a significant contribution not only to the shaping of their own denominational group, but also to safeguarding the Romanian identity. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, representatives of the clergy and prominent figures of the Greek-Catholic laity became the mouthpiece of the fight for the national rights and freedoms of the Romanian community in the Habsburg/Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>3</sup> In the last few months of World War I, through its extensive network of parishes and daughter churches, the Greek-Catholic Church contributed decisively to the institutionalisation of the Romanian structures of authority in Transylvania, by encouraging and directly involving its teachers and priests in setting up national councils and guards, which ensured the transfer of power from the old to the new administration that was gaining shape in those days.<sup>4</sup> The Church's power of shaping public opinion showed its positive fruits also in terms of the success of the Assembly in Alba Iulia, which formalised the Transylvanian Romanians' desire for political union with the Romanian Kingdom.<sup>5</sup> For all these reasons, the Greek-Catholic Church considered itself entitled to receive recognition for its efforts of strengthening Romanian national identity and ideals. The reality was going to disprove, one by one, these ambitious aspirations, and the causes of these unexpected disappointments for the Greek-Catholic Church must be sought in the political, cultural-ideological and religious context of the state that adopted it within its framework after December 1, 1918.

A notable difference from the previous period was related to the much lower motivation of the policymakers in Bucharest to act in order to protect the rights of the Catholic Church and promote its interests. Although he assumed the same religious (Catholic) identity as the former sovereigns of Vienna, the King of Romania, Ferdinand I, had not expressed a similar attitude toward the various Churches that recognised the authority of the sovereign pontiff and functioned on the territory of the new Romanian state, the Greek-Catholic Church being just one of those churches. Accepting the article of the constitution that required that the royal descendants should be baptised and educated in the confession of the vast majority of the Romanians, the sovereigns of the European dynasty of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen who reigned on the throne of Romania associated, at least at the level of the public image, the Reigning House with the Orthodox Church. This attachment imposed by the provisions of the fundamental law did not remain without negative consequences for the crowned heads of Romania. While, in the case of Carol I, the attitude of the Holy See did not radicalise (given that the royal family had lost, in early infancy, the only offspring to whom they had administered the sacrament of baptism in the Orthodox rite),<sup>6</sup> things were different in the case of his successor to the Romanian throne. Respecting, for all of six children, the provisions of Article 82 of the constitution, Ferdinand I experienced the personal drama of excommunication from the Catholic Church for nearly two decades.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the union of Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania had translated the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church from inside a state ruled by

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<sup>3</sup> Turcu 2019, 58–63.

<sup>4</sup> Turcu 2017 a, 36–37.

<sup>5</sup> Moga 2014, 144–145.

<sup>6</sup> Sima 2016, 189–201.

<sup>7</sup> Turcu 2015, 363–376.

a Catholic dynasty into one where the sovereign had to pay dearly for acts of infidelity to the faith professed by the Holy See.

The second factor that fundamentally changed the role and place of the Greek-Catholic Church compared to the previous period was the quantitative one. Formed and developed in an Empire marked by strong ethnic, confessional, linguistic, cultural, etc. divisions, but in which the majority of the population was subject to the sovereign pontiff, the Greek-Catholic Church was faced with unprecedented challenges upon the union of Transylvania with Romania.<sup>8</sup> One of these concerned the Romanian character of the state in which it now functioned. More than two centuries after its birth, the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church became part of a state entity that assumed the same ethnic identity as that of the believers it was shepherding.<sup>9</sup> This happy coincidence generously fuelled the already mentioned optimistic projections of the Church about its future within the frames of the new Romanian state. The other primordial novelty was related precisely to the confessional profile of the state that had adopted it. More specifically, out of the total population of approximately 18,000,000 inhabitants, the vast majority of the citizens of New Romania (13–14,000,000) belonged to the Orthodox Church from a confessional point of view. In these circumstances, the Greek-Catholic Church was forced to function, for the first time since its creation, in a country that was vastly Orthodox, and to assume the status of „little sister“ (about 1,400,000–1,500,000 people) in the constellation of Romanian denominations within the young Romanian state.<sup>10</sup>

In close connection with this new reality was another, much more important one. Namely, the existing imbalance between the confession that was dominant numerically speaking and the one that came second, also in numerical terms (as seen above, this was Greek-Catholicism) was reflected in the interconfessional relations between the two denominations.<sup>11</sup> This was especially visible in the Transylvanian area, where the relative numerical balance between the two Romanian denominations before the province's union with Romania was doubled by relations that were if not benign, then at least neutral. That explains why, from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the high prelates of the two Romanian Churches, together with several representatives of the clergy in their suborder, assumed the role of representing and demanding the fulfilment of the Romanians' national aspirations.<sup>12</sup> In other words, during the most important moments of the movement for the emancipation of the Transylvanian Romanians, the presence and contribution of the Romanian Church, with its two Transylvanian strands: Orthodox and Greek-Catholic, were of vital importance. It certainly mattered, in the manifestation of such collaborative and solidarity stances, that these efforts were made inside a state whose leadership was ethnically different from the mass of believers in each church; equally, each of them considered itself the constant target of premeditated policies directed against them by the Hungarian rulers, but also the keeper and defender of the Romanian identity

<sup>8</sup> Botond 2002, 273.

<sup>9</sup> Leslie 2004, 16.

<sup>10</sup> In the 1930s, there were 13,108,227 registered Orthodox out of the total number of 18,057,028 inhabitants in Romania (accounting for 72.6%), while the Greek-Catholics had 1,427,391 members (accounting for 7.9% of the total population of Romania), see Manuilă 1938, XXIV.

<sup>11</sup> Turcu 2012 a, 283–292.

<sup>12</sup> See Gyémánt 1986.

heritage. A fundamental change of the ethnic and religious coordinates of the state in which they came to operate influenced the relationship between the two Romanian Churches in Transylvania, by increasing the competitiveness between them.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, relations within the family of Catholic denominations in the new Romanian state were not among the most positive. If we are to refer only to the Latin and Greek rites, we must say that the high prelates of the Greek-Catholic Church tended to distance themselves from the Roman Catholic bishops, particularly from the Transylvanian hierarchs. This is largely understandable, given that the latter had declared in public their discontent with the new national boundaries of the Kingdom of Romania, refusing, in the first phase, to submit the oath of fidelity to the sovereign of their new country, and the juxtaposition of the bishops of the Greek-Catholic with their dissenting peers could have caused serious damage to the Greek-Catholic Church, affecting the image of its national loyalty.<sup>14</sup>

Even under these circumstances, which were not exactly favourable, the Greek-Catholic Church was forced to find its place and, more significantly, to configure its role within the new state, primarily as regards the legislative projects on the agenda of the politicians in Bucharest after the end of the war.<sup>15</sup> In particular, these projects included the Constitution, the law for the general regime of religious denominations, as well as the Concordat.

The need to develop a new fundamental law was based on the spectacular changes that the Romanian state had experienced as a result of the territorial unions proclaimed throughout 1918 and enshrined *grosso modo* through the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–1920.<sup>16</sup> The propagation of the law in force at the level of the provinces that had declared their union with the Kingdom of Romania even after that moment was just a provisional situation, which had to be put an end to by developing a new regulatory framework, envisaged to contribute to the welding of the various territories that made up the young Romanian state and to homogenise and standardise administrative structures, making possible a tighter control over the new national territory from the political centre in Bucharest. Although the principles which were to form the basis of a new constitution were subjected to public debate immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Trianon, its adoption occurred after the first months of liberal governance, in March of 1923 to be precise. Among those who took a stand in those days on the values that should guide the new Constitution were the clergy of the two Romanian Churches, heavily seconded by representatives of the laity. As rightful members of the Senate, the bishops of the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic Churches actively participated in the intense debates that emerged in the country's Parliament, each „choir“ being aware of the fact that the prerequisites for the future development of the new Romanian state would depend on the content of the constitutional articles referring to the confessions. For that reason, the representatives of the Orthodox Church pleaded for perpetuating the status conferred to the confession of the great majority of Romanians under the Constitution of 1866, all the more so as the number of its members had grown in the above-mentioned proportions. By contrast, the Greek-Catholic Church believed that the principle included in the resolution of Union

<sup>13</sup> Hitchins 1995, 135–136; Ghişa 2012, 54–82.

<sup>14</sup> Maner 2007, 177–186.

<sup>15</sup> Niga 2001, 226–227.

<sup>16</sup> Bucur 2003, 16.

adopted in Alba Iulia, which decreed „equal justification and full, autonomous confessional freedom for all the religious denominations in the state“ had to underlie the new Romanian Constitution.<sup>17</sup> The final formula included in the fundamental law adopted then was the result of a compromise. The position of the Orthodox Church was strengthened by its recognition as „dominant in the Romanian state,“ as long as the Greek-Catholic Church was assigned the prerogative of having „precedence over the other denominations.“ The sole quality recognised to both Churches in the same constitutional provision was that of being Romanian, which amounted to equalising their status from the point of view of the political decision-makers' right to intrude in the management and organisation of each of the two Romanian Churches.

The second legislative act that underpinned the functioning of religious entities, including the Greek-Catholic Church, was the law for the general regime of religious denominations. Such a regulation proved necessary given that the confessional landscape had diversified so much after the creation of Greater Romania. In the new confessional context after 1918, adaptation was necessary in a twofold sense: firstly, the Romanian state needed to adjust to the pluri-confessional realities within its territory, closely related not only to the old religious horizon in which they had operated for decades or centuries, but also to the traditions and laws that had regulated their activity throughout time; secondly, the religious denominations needed to adapt to the new political, cultural and religious context of the Romanian state, in which the Orthodox by far outnumbered the members of the other denominations and had been accustomed to a certain privileged treatment from the state.<sup>18</sup> Although the first version of the draft law had been submitted to the consideration of the representatives of the religious denominations at the end of 1922, the government gave priority at that time, as we have seen, to the adoption of a new Constitution, and to regulating the functioning of the majority Church under the 1925 „Law and Statute for the Organisation of the Romanian Orthodox Church,“ a normative act that underlay not only the drafting of the law of minority religious denominations, but also their organisation and operation by respecting the rights conferred upon „the dominant Church in the Romanian state.“ Even if the leaders of the Catholic Church took firm positions on the different drafts of the law that had been submitted to their attention prior to its adoption in the spring of 1928, their well-founded views were neglected by the legislators.<sup>19</sup> What made a difference in this situation was the fact that, at the level of the Ministry of Religious Denominations, the sole constant and well-informed representative of the Catholic Church was the priest-professor Zenovie Păclișanu. The Greek-Catholic Church was not well represented even at the level of the special commission created at the level of the Senate for discussing the draft of the law proposed by the Ministry. Except for I. Pecurariu, the Greek-Catholic Church had no other delegate in that body whose leadership had been conferred on the highest-ranking Orthodox prelate, Patriarch Miron Cristea. The development, by the officials and ministerial experts belonging to the Orthodox Church, of successive draft laws for the regulation of the regime of religious denominations and the verification of the contents of the law articles by representatives of the clergy of this

<sup>17</sup> Biró 2004, 472.

<sup>18</sup> Gillet 1995, 348–350; Turcu 2013, 367–406.

<sup>19</sup> For an extensive approach, see Turcu 2017 a, 82–151.



Church was a further cause of disregarding the wishes of the Greek-Catholic Church about the manner of drafting the new legislation. Nor did the pressure exerted by the Holy See's diplomatic envoys to Romania on the leaders in Bucharest have the expected effect. The desirable option for the high Pontifical circles was that the law for the general regime of religious denominations should be adopted after the conclusion of the Concordat or that the Catholic Church in Romania should be exempted from that law. Given that none of these variants were agreed on by the Romanian side, and the secrecy surrounding the drafting of the last draft law generated suspicions and fears about the possible abuses that this draft might contain against the Greek-Catholic Church, its secular and clerical elite reacted promptly, urging the mass of believers to solidarity in order to protect the fundamental rights of the Church. The most important result of the call for the peaceful mobilisation of the Greek-Catholic priests and believers was the birth within the Greek-Catholic Church of a powerful body whose role in the revitalisation of the intellectual and cultural life of the Church and in the expression of the Greek-Catholic confessional identity was fundamental. This was the General Association of Greek-Catholic Romanians (hereafter abbreviated as A.G.R.U.). Only by way of an exemplary mobilisation of the laity and the major confrontation in the legislative body of the country, was it possible to remove it from the final text of the law the articles that could have endangered the smooth operation of the Greek-Catholic Church, for instance, articles on the right of ownership of ecclesiastical assets or on the fate of those properties in the case the believers converted from one denomination to another. The denouement of the process of adopting the law for the general regime of religious denominations was seen as a victory of the pro-Catholic movement in Romania. Taking into account the composition of Parliament (the vast majority of whose members were Orthodox), the fact that the Senators and MPs of the National Peasants' Party (a party considered, at the time, at least by some of its leaders, to be of Greek-Catholic orientation) withdrew from discussions, and considering that, throughout the debates, the government was under counselled by the Orthodox prelates (well anchored in the power structures by virtue of the patriarch's position within the Regency), the passing of the law for the general regime of religious denominations, by amending or eliminating the articles deemed dangerous for the Greek-Catholic Church was the result of a tenacious persuasion effort on the part of its elite (clerical and secular alike), of unconditional support from the Holy See, but also of the public pressure coming from the Greek-Catholic believers and not only.<sup>20</sup>

As regards the conclusion of the Concordat between the Romanian state and the Holy See, the agreement had become useful and even necessary for both parties in terms of the changes that had occurred at the end of the war, both in terms of the number of subjects of the sovereign pontiff who lived within the borders of Romania, on the one hand, and the reconfigured strategies of papal diplomacy during the post-war period, on the other hand.<sup>21</sup> Specifically, the number of citizens in the new Romanian state who recognised the authority of the sovereign pontiff had risen to almost 3 million. From the point of view of the ecclesiastical infrastructure, after the end of the war there were no fewer than 10 dioceses (6 of Latin rite and 4 of Greek rite, without taking into account the extensions of

<sup>20</sup> See Ardeleanu 1928.

<sup>21</sup> Bucur 2017, 33–47.

the various hierarchical authorities from abroad on the new Romanian national territory). Although (more or less serious) attempts to establish a diplomatic convention between Romania and the Holy See had also existed in the pre-war period, concrete steps to perfect such an agreement were made in the final months of the war and in the following decade.

Since this was an international agreement, the task of negotiating and concluding it went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which, given the nature of the treaty, rallied the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Arts in that endeavour. Taking into account the fact that during the 1920s there were persons of Orthodox confession at the helm of these institutions and, especially, that the governments that ruled the country were aware of the unpopularity of such a convention, its signing was postponed until 10 May 1927. Although it was deeply interested in the content of the future Concordat, the Greek-Catholic Church had to assume rather the role of a spectator of the official steps that were taken. This did not prevent it from expressing its views on the Concordat draft laws made either by the Romanians or by the Holy See, and from proposing its own versions of the texts that would underlie the diplomatic negotiations (as it happened through Vasile Lucaciu, Demetriu Radu and Alexandru Nicolescu, or on the occasion of the bishops' conference held in Bucharest on 28 February 1920). The common denominator of all the projects emanating from within the Greek-Catholic Church was the diversification and expansion of its network of dioceses, the preservation of its rights concerning religious education in schools, the reinforcement of its right to administer its movable and immovable property and to multiply it, even with the support of the state. The extensive debate and public impassioned media campaigns (fuelled, unsurprisingly, by the Orthodox Church), which questioned the desirability of Romania's reaching an agreement with the Holy See, trapped in their web the Greek-Catholic Church, the latter being accused of being part of an international organisation that altered the „Romanian soul,” or supported the „enemies of Romania.”<sup>22</sup> It was only after the adoption of the said law which regulated the regime of religious denominations in Romania that the country's legislative body considered ratifying the Concordat, although it had been signed, as we have seen, in the spring of 1927. Held in an atmosphere of social tension and only after the Romanian government obtained from the State Secretariat of the Holy See a series of explanations of some articles in the text of the agreement, the heated parliamentary debates resulted in the adoption of the Concordat. For the Greek-Catholic Church, this meant clarifying its relations with the Romanian state, but also a new institutional-organisational configuration, adapted if not to all of its needs, at least to its stringent ones.

Regarding the new administrative-jurisdictional structure, it should be noted that the Union of Transylvania with Romania imposed on the Greek-Catholic Church the need to adapt its hierarchical and organisational infrastructure to the new state in which it came to function.<sup>23</sup> It was necessary, first of all, to reduce the existing imbalance of jurisdictional territories of the existing administrative structures (the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraş and the suffragan Dioceses of Oradea, Gherla and Lugoj) and the number of faithful belonging to each. The more extensive dioceses were those whose cities of residence were located inside the historical province of Transylvania (the Archdiocese and, respectively,

<sup>22</sup> See Ghişa 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Georgescu 1929, 796.

the Diocese of Gherla, which was composed of over 500 parishes and more than 560,000 souls), while those placed outside the perimeter had a smaller area, becoming, after the creation of Greater Romania, border eparchies (the Dioceses of Oradea and Lugoj). The second major objective was the intention to multiply the episcopal power centres. This objective proved to be of the utmost importance because it served both the need to make the church administration more efficient and flexible (thus attempting to bring the shepherds closer to the mass of believers) and the need to counter the extension of the network of Orthodox dioceses in areas with a higher concentration of Greek-Catholic believers, such as Maramureş, the north-west of the country or the centre of Transylvania, where such church structures had been established or planned to be created. The avalanche of projects that the Greek-Catholic Church representatives launched in those times included the foundation of several dioceses and even the transfer of the residence of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan Bishop from Blaj to Cluj.<sup>24</sup> Since the latter proposal was not accepted entirely even within the episcopate at the time, the only notable changes enshrined in the text of the Concordat (the agreement upon which depended the whole reorganisation of the Roman Catholic Church in Romanian, hence, also that of the Greek-Catholic Church) were those related to the transfer of the episcopal see from Gherla to Cluj and the creation of a new diocese in the northern part of the country, one whose residence was eventually set up in Baia Mare.<sup>25</sup> Finally, the third goal of the Greek-Catholic Church after the Union was the creation of new parishes in the extra-Carpathian space, where the number of Greek-Catholic believers had risen, as they looked for jobs in towns such as Craiova, Ploieşti, Galaţi, Brăila and, of course, Bucharest. In the capital of the country there was the largest community of Greek-Catholic believers (estimated, immediately after World War I, at 15,000–20,000, with a growing trend throughout the interwar period), for the benefit of whom the first place of Greek-Catholic worship outside Transylvania had been built and consecrated in 1909: the Church of „St. Basil the Great“ on Polonă St. All the attempts of the Metropolitan See of Blaj, under whose ecclesiastical authority the Holy See had placed the Greek-Catholics in all the provinces outside Transylvania, to organise them in parishes so as to preserve their own religious identity were impeded by material hardships and by the opposition of the Orthodox Church, which could not accept the expansion and consolidation of the Greek-Catholic Church, in an area in which it did not have ancient roots. This is how any initiative to establish a hierarchical centre in the capital of the country was doomed to failure. Only in 1940 was a vicar bishop introduced for Bucharest and the Old Kingdom, with the residence in the city on the banks of the Dâmboviţa. The first to occupy this ecclesiastical position was Vasile Aftenie.

From an institutional-administrative point of view, the Greek-Catholic Church was reorganised in this period under the provisions of the bull *Sollemni Conventione* of 5 June 1930 in a *unicam provinciam ecclesiasticam* directly subjected to the authority of the Holy See. The Archdiocese of Alba-Iulia and Făgăraş was led, during this period, by the archbishops and metropolitans Vasile Suci (1920–1935) and Alexandru Nicolescu (1936–1941); the Diocese of Oradea was led by Demetriu Radu (1903–1920) and Valeriu Traian Frenţiu (1922–1952); the Diocese of Gherla, which in 1930 became the Diocese of

<sup>24</sup> Turcu 2012 b, 111–124.

<sup>25</sup> Turcu 2012 c, 83–108.

Cluj-Napoca, was shepherded by Iuliu Hossu (1917–1970); the Diocese of Lugoj was led by Traian Frențiu (1913–1922), Alexandru Nicolescu (1922–1926) and Ioan Bălan (1936–1959), and the newly created eparchy of Maramureș, by Alexandru Rusu (1931–1963).<sup>26</sup>

One of the thorniest problems for the Greek-Catholic Church in the period between the two World Wars was that of education. First of all, the Church was forced to relinquish its vast network of denominational schools,<sup>27</sup> which had assumed in time a fundamental role not only in disseminating elementary education among peasant families, whose children attended them, but also in preserving the benchmarks of confessional and national identity. The advance of such phenomena as secularisation or religious indifference in the Romanian society led the Church to face the problem of fewer classes of religion in secondary schools belonging to the state. In these circumstances, the entire effort of the Church had to be focused on strengthening its own network of educational institutions and on building new ones. Between the two world wars there were normal (pedagogical) schools in Blaj, Oradea and Gherla, and high schools in localities such as Blaj and Beiuș. In order to increase the quality of the theological training of future priests, efforts were made to establish a central seminary in Blaj, where the highest quality education was to be provided to those who would become shepherds of souls. But the priesthood has also become less attractive as time passed. The reasons behind this unfortunate reality were related to the ever growing need out for personnel in the expansive network of state schools or in the dense bureaucratic apparatus, and this made young people's interest in the priesthood decline significantly, while the number of people abandoning this vocation grew alarmingly at the time.<sup>28</sup> The prospect of a transfer to urban areas and, of course, a higher level of pay in educational institutions and in the administration were sufficient reasons for so many priests to abandon their post, while the priesthood was no longer a springboard for social ascent and prestige, as it had used to be. In these circumstances, the Church had to think of a series of strategies to overcome the crisis. The plan to join the diocesan seminaries in a central one was unsuccessful. On the contrary, in Lugoj, the seminary opened there in the autumn of 1913 by Valeriu Traian Frențiu had to close its doors after World War I because of the low number of young people enrolled. Nor were the plan to establish a Faculty of Catholic Theology and a dormitory for the future students either at the University of Bucharest or at the University of Cluj more successful. The opposition of the Orthodox hierarchy was decisive each and every time, both when the Minister of Religious Denominations and Public Instruction, Ion Borcea, a member of the first cabinet headed by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, made such a proposal, and when the great historian Nicolae Iorga resumed it in 1932, in the draft law on higher education he created as chairman of the Council of Ministers and as Minister of Public Instruction and Religious Denominations. This is why the Greek-Catholic Church was forced to limit the training of its future priests to the theological seminars (academies) in Blaj, Oradea, and Cluj. An important success in the field of the education of the future priests was the foundation of the *Pio Romeno* College on 12 May 1930 and its official opening on 9 May 1937. Although it served only as a hostel in which the Romanian students in the capital of

<sup>26</sup> For the biography and activity of these hierarchs, see Știrban, Știrban 2005.

<sup>27</sup> Bucur 2006, 133–138.

<sup>28</sup> Bârlea 1998, 92–93.



the Catholic world were accommodated, it played an essential role in facilitating access to the highest quality education by providing scholarships to the most industrious students.

One of the most important achievements of the period was the reactivation of monastic life in the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church.<sup>29</sup> It was a necessary undertaking, given the already mentioned crisis of priestly vocations, but also the major challenges to traditional religious identities brought by the diversification and intensification of the activity of religious sects. Although this goal was expressed on the occasion of the three provincial councils organised in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (in 1872, 1882 and 1900), the revival of monastic life within the Greek-Catholic Church occurred only in the interwar period. A significant contribution in this respect was made by Vasile Suci, the first Greek-Catholic Metropolitan of Greater Romania, who obtained, in the audience he had with Pope Benedict XV in April 1921, the approval for the founding of monastic orders of the Romanian rite. The sovereign pontiff even allowed him to gather in congregations all those who were already active in similar organisations of the Catholic Church. The first monastic order created in the era was a feminine one: the Congregation of the Sisters of the Mother of God. The nucleus around which the new Congregation emerged was by mother Febronia Mureşan, the daughter of a clergyman, who had made her novitiate in the Congregation of the Poor Franciscans and who carried out charitable actions in Târgu-Mureş after the war. The first mission entrusted to the brave women who joined the organisation as soon as it was set up (among them being the daughter of Minister Dimitrie Greceanu) was to provide protection and education to children who benefited from shelter and food in the modest, but so necessary orphanage founded in Blaj in autumn 1918. After the transfer of that social settlement to Obreja, the Congregation established its residence there. A part of its members ensured the primary training of the hundreds of poor children, whom they protected, enabling them to discover in workshops the secrets of some trades that might help them earn their daily living as adults. In the following years, the Congregation acquired more and more adherents, diversifying its spheres of activity. The number of its territorial branches grew. The main places where the members of this Congregation performed educational, charitable, medical and cultural activities were Blaj, Cluj, Geoagiu de Jos, Aiud, Craiova, Brăila, Bucharest etc. During the period between the two world wars, the Basilian Order gained „roots“ in the Greek-Catholic metropolitan province. Up to that point, the few monks who had been active had followed the spiritual rules prescribed by St. Basil the Great, but had not belonged to that monastic organisation.<sup>30</sup> Even before World War I, in the Diocese of Lugoj, there had been an attempt to restore the Basilian Order in the convent of Prislop, the mastermind behind this project being Fr. Leon Manu. After the end of the war, the project in question received an impetus from the entire episcopate, headed by the bishop, Metropolitan Vasile Suci, who was also trying to establish other monastic centres where aspirants of that monastic organisation could carry out their novitiate and then import the prescribed cohabitation rules, laying the foundation of such communities in Romania. The solution chosen in the end was for Augustin Pop, along with three other debutants (including his brother, Iuliu, Atanasie Maxim and Gheorghe Alic), to undertake their novitiate in the Basilian monastery of Krikov, in Poland. After a year and a half, the

<sup>29</sup> Turcu 2017 a, 329–333.

<sup>30</sup> Furtună 2016, 85–104.

first generation of Romanian monks belonging to the Basilian Order was repatriated, Fr. Augustin, Fr. Lucian and brother Vasile settling at Prislop Monastery. Fr. Augustin became the abbot of that monastic settlement, on August 1, 1924, and Atanasie Maxim became abbot of the monastery of Bixad, in 1925. As abbot of the monastery in the Land of Oaş, Maxim was able to attract to Bixad the group of monks residing at Prislop (a place where monks might have felt limited as regards the development of their monastic community). This led to the emergence of a new reformed Basilian community in the bosom of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church. It was very active and played an important role in the expansion of the Order of St. Basil the Great in Romania. Gradually, the principles of Basilian monastic life spread to other monastic centres (Moisei, Nicula, etc.), penetrating with greater difficulty the territory of the archdiocese, which eventually happened in 1938, when several monks settled in Obreja. The ratification of the Concordat between Romania and the Holy See<sup>31</sup> made it possible to launch the procedure for the establishment of the Romanian province of the Order, in 1937, when the province of the „Holy Apostles Peter and Paul“ was founded, as part of the Basilian Order of St. Iosafat, whose superior general resided in Rome in 1932.<sup>32</sup> The first elected provincial superior was Fr. Atanasie Maxim. Other monastic orders that were active among the Greek-Catholic Romanians (and not only) were: the Assumptionists, the Jesuits, the Franciscans, etc.

A more dynamic spiritual life and strengthening confessional identity were other features of the period under consideration.<sup>33</sup> These were goals shared by the Greek-Catholic clergy and believers alike. Among the means used for the improvement of the intellectual and moral horizon of the priests were spiritual exercises, introduced in the Greek-Catholic Church by Valeriu Traian Frențiu, during his episcopacy in Lugoj, and generalised in all the dioceses in the inter-war period. Such practices involved the clergy spending a time (usually three days) in prayer, meditation and reflection. Also, in order to expand the cultural and moral training of priests (who continued to represent, at least in rural areas, a model of social conduct and „guardians“ of Christian values), and to increase solidarity between them, priestly associations were encouraged. These organisations were: the „Association of Worshipping Priests“ (Valeriu Traian Frențiu introduced it in the Diocese of Lugoj and in that of Oradea, with the purpose of pursuing the cult of the Eucharist and celebrating Holy Mass on a daily basis); the „Association of Saint Nicetas of Remesiana“ (it was meant for celibate priests and promoted intense prayer and meditation); the „Association of the Holy Apostle Peter“ (it was founded in 1936 in the archdiocese, expanding subsequently to the Diocese of Cluj-Gherla and, after World War II, at the level of the whole Greek-Catholic Church; it was intended for the married and widowed priests, promoting canonical hours, the study of theology works, the sacrament of confession, and the frequent celebration of the Holy Mass). Among the believers, there also emerged a strong associationist-religious spirit.<sup>34</sup> This fact was perceived as a necessity, given that in those years an important topic of conversation in certain circles of the Greek-Catholic intelligentsia concerned the

<sup>31</sup> For a relevant analysis on the consequences of the conclusion of the Concordat between Romania and the Holy See, see Nóda 2010, 281–301.

<sup>32</sup> Rotche 2011, 101.

<sup>33</sup> Bârlea 1998, 94–95.

<sup>34</sup> For an extensive approach, see Rotche 2011.

possibility of the laity becoming involved in the decision-making structures of the Church, according to the model of the Orthodox Church. The vehement opposition of the pontifical authorities to such a project meant that the energies of the Greek-Catholic laity were to be devoted to a large number of Marian organisations, associations and congregations, Societies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Rosary Associations, the „St. Helen“ Society of female believers and its masculine counterpart, the „St. Paul“ Society (the last two appearing in the early 1920s in the parish of St. Basil the Great in Bucharest), etc. Taken individually or together, these societies answered the need to keep the piety of the faithful awake and to strengthen their confessional identity. Of course, the most active and well organised was the above-mentioned A.G.R.U.,<sup>35</sup> whose branches went from the diocesan level to the parochial one. The annual congresses of the Association, held in different localities of Transylvania, were attended by hierarchs, intellectuals and very many believers, becoming a space for the debate of the most pressing issues affecting the life of the Church. The need to include young people within the Church's own organisation determined the creation in 1931 of the Association of Greek-Catholic Romanian Students (A.S.T.R.U.). With its headquarters in Cluj, it organised conferences, gatherings, charitable actions etc. to stimulate the piety of the faithful, a decisive contribution belonged to the popular missions, introduced before World War I and continued over the following period. What turned out to be much more important in the era, in terms of their popularity, were religious pilgrimages.<sup>36</sup> This practice was stimulated by the appearance of several monastic pilgrimage centres on the confessional map of Greek-Catholicism. These attracted thousands and even tens of thousands of believers year after year. This was the case, for example, of Lupşa Monastery in the Apuseni Mountains, Prislop Monastery, Strâmba Monastery, or Moiseiu Monastery. But the greatest pilgrimages, which took place at the Feast of the Assumption and which gathered believers from all corners of Transylvania (and not only), were those from Bixad Monastery (belonging, after 1930, to the newly established Diocese of Maramureş) and from Nicula Monastery in the Diocese of Cluj-Gherla. Both religious settlements were used by the members of the Basilian Order (there was also a printing office and, after World War I, an orphanage at the monastery from the Land of Oaş). But the practice of pilgrimages also spread across the country's borders, the most sought-after destination for Greek-Catholic believers being, of course, Rome. During the inter-war period a number of pilgrimages were organised to the Eternal City, for instance, in 1925 (on the occasion of the Holy Year, when the 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea was celebrated), and in 1933, 1936, or 1937, on the occasion of the inauguration of the *Pio Romeno* College on Gianicolo Hill. Canonical visitations contributed massively to supervising the parishioners' mores and ensured the proximity of the „herd“ to its spiritual shepherds. All of the bishops were interested to know the dioceses they led and to alleviate, as far as possible, the sorrows of their believers, but none of them surpassed Bishop Iuliu Hossu (nicknamed, for this reason, the „bishop of canonical visitations“), who was at the helm of the most numerous diocese of the Greek-Catholic Church. Not once, such „apostolic pilgrimages“ of the bishops through the dioceses they led were occasioned by the sanctification of new places of worship. The interwar period is also significant for the construction of new churches

<sup>35</sup> See Tăutu 1931; Rus 2009.

<sup>36</sup> For an excellent analysis of the phenomenon of pilgrimage in the Romanian society, see Bănică 2014.

(both in cities, where the phenomenon of Romanianizing<sup>37</sup> them was in full swing, and in villages). Some of them became genuine architectural symbols. Such new buildings, representative for the Greek-Catholic Church, were those in Braşov, Târgu Mureş, Zalău and Satu Mare. The architecture and the interior decoration of these new churches made it possible to perpetuate the canon of Byzantine art, combined with indigenous aesthetic elements and with aspects pertaining to the great Western architectural styles.

The period between the two world wars was significant in the life of the Catholic Church for the abundant and diverse publications that saw the light of print. The publishing plan included both catechetical-religious literature, such as prayer books, liturgical books, textbooks, and treatises of dogmatics (Metropolitan Vasile Suciuc distinguished himself in the field through treatises of fundamental dogmatic theology and special dogmatic theology, which were published before World War I and reprinted in the inter-war period),<sup>38</sup> and books of sermons, meditations, hagiographies, etc. There were also works of history, several specialists in the field bringing major contributions to the investigation of the past of the Greek-Catholic Church and not only. The most important were: Zenovie Păclişanu, Iacob Radu (brother of Bishop Demetriu Radu), Ioan Georgescu, Elie Dăianu, Ioan Boroş, Nicolae Brînzeu, etc. An important role in informing and broadening the cultural horizon of the readers was played by religious magazines, newspapers, and calendars. In addition to „Cultura creştină,” published since before the war, newspapers were founded in almost all the dioceses: „Vestitorul,” in Oradea; „Curierul creştin,” the official publication of the Diocese of Cluj-Gherla; „Sionul românesc,” in Lugoj. In diaristics, „Unirea” continued to be the most influential (along with „Unirea poporului”), but there were other journalistic projects as well: „Albina,” „Viaţa creştină,” etc.

One of the characteristics of the period was also the intense synodal activity.<sup>39</sup> Synods had become absolutely necessary considering the great upheavals experienced by the Church after World War I. The Church needed to adapt and find solutions to the major challenges it was facing. Deanery and diocesan synods were held in each such administrative unit of the Church, at different intervals of time. A provincial council could not be organised, although such an assembly would have been most welcome at the time. Even so, the topics of discussion in synods were of utmost topicality and importance for the Church: from the wages of priests, to the multiplication of the capital for funds and foundations (from which many scholarships continued to be granted to outstanding pupils and students between the two world wars); from measures for intensifying and diversifying catechisation, to those relating to the preservation and expansion of the Church's material heritage; from a growing efficiency of the church administration to the establishment of metropolitans in the Romanian Church Greek-Catholic, etc.<sup>40</sup> The latter theme concerned the clergy and, especially, their superiors, given that the old custom of acceding to the highest rung in the Greek-Catholic Church no longer pleased anyone.<sup>41</sup> After consulting the episcopate, Metropolitan Vasile Suciuc began drafting a regulation for establishing his

<sup>37</sup> Biró 2004, 480–490.

<sup>38</sup> Turcu 2017 b, 317–336.

<sup>39</sup> Turcu 2017 a, 475–543.

<sup>40</sup> Rotche 2013, 411–415.

<sup>41</sup> Turcu 2017 a, 544–583.



successors to the metropolitan see, which he submitted to the Holy See for approval. The opposition of the pontifical authorities to some provisions of the normative act and their belated resolution led to the first and only election of a metropolitan in Greater Romania (the electoral synod held in Blaj on May 7, 1935) to be held under provisional auspices.

Finally, one of the great themes that generated passionate discussions, especially within some intellectual circles, was the Union of the two Romanian Churches. A subject of such importance could only be viewed from a multiple and often contradictory perspective.<sup>42</sup> The Orthodox Church believed that with the realisation of the Romanians' political and national unity after World War I, the political and cultural role of the Greek-Catholic Church had ended, and the clergy and their faithful were called to unity of faith with the vast majority of Romanians.<sup>43</sup> From this perspective, the Greek-Catholic Church was regarded as a mere stage in the history of the Romanians, and the perpetuation of its existence would be a simple reminder of the religious schisms from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century inside the Romanian community. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this fragmentation risked rendering the political unity achieved in 1918 vulnerable.<sup>44</sup> The Greek-Catholic Church, however, dared to hope that once the political unity of the Romanian nation was achieved, its Latin roots had to be happily intertwined with the faith of the Roman Church so that Romanians could align themselves, as quickly as possible, the level of development and civilisation of the Latin peoples in Europe.<sup>45</sup> This is why the Greek-Catholic Church best corresponded to the Romanian ethos because it „poured the enlightened soul of the West into the Eastern body of our nation.”<sup>46</sup> How far this ideal would be from the solution found within the Greek-Catholic Church was to be demonstrated by the events that occurred after World War II, which opened a new page in its history: that of ordeal, persecutions and suffering, without which there is no true Resurrection.

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<sup>42</sup> See, for instance, Theodorian-Carada 1928; Ghibu 1931.

<sup>43</sup> Gudea 2000, 54.

<sup>44</sup> Alzati, Evola 2016, 646–650.

<sup>45</sup> Biró 2004, 464.

<sup>46</sup> The quotation is an extract from the speech delivered by Metropolitan Vasile Suciuc after submitting the oath of allegiance to King Ferdinand I. For details, see Turcu 2017 a, 273–275.

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## THE HOLY SEE AND THE ROMANIANS IN SPAIN IN THE EARLY 1950S

VERONICA TURCUȘ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** This study, based on an unpublished document preserved in the Archives of the Italian Foreign Ministry in Rome, brings new information on the policy of the Holy See towards Romanians in the early 1950s. Faced with the unilateral severance of diplomatic relations by the regime of popular democracy that had been established in Bucharest and was entirely at the beck and call of Moscow, the Apostolic See decided to support the Romanians in exile, spiritually and materially. This mission was entrusted to Monsignor John Columbus Kirk, former secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bucharest. Appointed by the Holy See to head the Romanian Catholic Mission in Spain, Monsignor Kirk was tasked with assisting all the Romanian emigrants in Western Europe, whether they were Greek-Catholic or Orthodox, an activity that was to be carried out with American financial help. Consisting largely of right-wing and far-right refugees received by Francoist Spain during and after World War II, the Romanian community in Madrid organised itself as an anti-communist resistance outpost. This study attempts to highlight precisely the interesting manner in which Catholicism and militant Orthodoxy allied in those years in the fight against the atheism promoted by the regime of Stalinist inspiration in Bucharest.

**Keywords:** Holy See, Romanian exile, Francoist Spain, Vatican diplomacy

**Rezumat:** Prezentul studiu, bazat pe un document inedit conservat în Arhivele Ministerului de Externe al Italiei de la Roma, aduce informații noi asupra politicii Sfântului Scaun față de români la începutul anilor 1950. Confruntat cu denunțarea unilaterală a raporturilor diplomatice de către regimul de democrație populară instaurat la București și aservit Moscovei, Scaunul Apostolic a ales să sprijine, spiritual și material, exilul românesc, încredințând această misiune monseniorului John Columbus Kirk, fost secretar al Nunțiaturii Apostolice de la București. Numit de Sfântul Scaun în fruntea Misiunii Catolice Române din Spania, monseniorului Kirk îi era încredințată opera de asistență a tuturor emigranților români din Europa Occidentală, fie că erau greco-catolici sau ortodocși, activitate pe care urma să o desfășoare cu ajutor financiar american. Constituită în mare parte din refugiați de dreapta și extremă dreapta primiți de Spania franchistă în timpul și după cel de Al Doilea Război Mondial, comunitatea românească de la Madrid s-a organizat ca o structură de rezistență anticomunistă, studiul încercând să sublinieze tocmai maniera interesantă în care catolicismul și ortodoxia militantă s-au aliat în anii respectivi în lupta împotriva ateismului promovat de regimul de inspirație stalinistă de la București.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Sfântul Scaun, exilul românesc, Spania franchistă, diplomația vaticană

The unilateral discontinuation of the relations between Romania and the Holy See, in the summer of 1950, was the result of a consistent policy pursued by the regime of popular democracy imposed in Bucharest in 1948. This policy aimed to undermine

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the authority of the Catholic Church in the newly established People's Republic, heavily enslaved to ideological precepts imported from Moscow. Ever since 1946, within the order of international relations, Romania had revolved in an orbit around the great Stalinist power in the east. The Soviet influence was beginning to prevail, gradually and by any means possible, in every aspect of the Romanian society at that time. For example, it is relevant that in 1946, the primacy granted to the apostolic nuncio by diplomatic tradition – that of dean of the diplomatic corps accredited in Bucharest – was no longer respected, as the ambassador of the Soviet Union took now pride of place among the foreign envoys in Bucharest. The head of the Nunciature in Bucharest, Monsignor Andrea Cassulo (1869–1952), appointed apostolic nuncio to Romania on June 14, 1936, was removed in 1946, precisely in order to undermine the position of the Catholic Church, which represented, in terms of the prestige of its diplomatic corps, the guarantee of sustainable relations with the Western democracies. Thus, at that time, the diplomatic corps accredited in Bucharest was faced with the regrettable situation of having no dean, or, more precisely, of having two deans. One, *de jure condito*, was the nuncio, who demanded compliance with his traditional prerogatives even if he was recalled. The Romanian Foreign Affairs protocol granted him this prerogative unconditionally, mentioning this in the list of the diplomatic corps distributed to the representatives of the Western states – until the arrival of his successor, whose entry visa had been indefinitely postponed by the Allied Control Commission, dominated by the Soviets.<sup>2</sup> The other, *de jure condendo*, was the Soviet ambassador, who considered himself leader of the diplomats in Bucharest, a position recognised especially by the representatives of the Slavic states.<sup>3</sup> The period during which Monsignor Cassulo was at the head of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bucharest was followed by an interim stage, in which Monsignor Gerald O'Hara, Bishop of Savannah (Georgia, USA)<sup>4</sup> occupied the position of regent of

<sup>2</sup> Under the Armistice Convention signed by the Romanian delegation headed by Lucreţiu Pătrăşcanu in Moscow on 12 September 1944, between the Romanian Government and the governments of the USSR, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the U.S. – having as signatory, on behalf of the Allies, the representative of the Allied High Command (Soviet), Marshal Malinowski – Romania, through Romanian High Command and the Romanian Government, was bound to provide all the necessary facilities to the Soviet troops and other allied forces, so that they could move freely on the territory of Romania, in any direction, at the expense of the Romanian state, whether by land, water or air. It was also stipulated that an Allied Control Commission should be established to enforce the provisions of the armistice, under the command of the Soviet High Command. The Government of Romania and its subordinated bodies had to carry out the instructions of the Allied Control Commission, in their entirety. The commission was based in Bucharest and monitored the entire Romanian administration until the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty on February 10, 1947. Romania was bound to accept the consistent presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the country, the change of its political regime and the payment of significant war damages. See *Convenţie de armistiţiu* 1944, 14.

<sup>3</sup> For details, see Turcuş 2013, 234; Turcuş 2015, 377–379.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald Patrick Aloysius O'Hara (1895–1963), Bishop of Savannah (U.S.) from 1935 to 1959, regent of the Apostolic Nunciature to Romania (1947–1950), pontifical nuncio to Ireland (1951–1954) and apostolic delegate to Great Britain (1954–1963). His ascent in the hierarchy of the Roman Church was quite rapid. Just 9 years after his consecration as a priest in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia in April 1929, and one month later he was ordained titular Bishop of Heliopolis in Phoenicia. After the end of his mission in Bucharest on 5 July 1950, he was appointed, on 12 July the same year, Archbishop *ad personam* of Savannah, and on 27 November 1951 apostolic nuncio to Dublin. On 8 June 1954, he was appointed by the Holy See as apostolic delegate to London, a position he was to hold until his death on 16 July 1963. On 12 November 1959, he resigned from his church position in Savannah and was appointed Archbishop of Pessinus. He remained known among American prelates for his liberal views and for stimulating

the diplomatic mission of the Holy See in Romania. The regency of O'Hara, beginning on February 19, 1947, when the American bishop was appointed in Bucharest, represented an extremely difficult stage in the relations between Romania and the Apostolic See, especially as it took place against the backdrop of deteriorating relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Vatican.<sup>5</sup> This happened in a context in which the Vatican had proposed a pontifical legate who was not of Italian extraction – as the custom had been since the establishment of the Apostolic Nunciature in Romania by Pope Benedict XV in 1920 – but, to make matters worse, in the sense that this proposal was a slap in the face of the authorities in Moscow, who were bent on controlling the states included in their sphere of influence, this nuncio came from the United States and had an important position in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church there. The period of O'Hara's regency coincided, among other things, with an era of silencing the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania by the Decree Law of December 1, 1948, a decree which, as is well known, stipulated the abolition of the central and statutory organisations of the Greek-Catholic Church, including those of Armenian and Ruthenian rite.<sup>6</sup> There were many persecutions to which the Catholic clergy and faithful were subjected after the Romanian state denounced the Concordat with the Holy See (July 17, 1948) and there was state interference in the organisation of the Catholic Church, which should have represented one of the pontifical prerogatives *par excellence* (see the Law of Religious Denominations of August 1948).<sup>7</sup> The firm stance of the regent O'Hara as regards his condemnation of the Romanian authorities' treatment of the Greek-Catholic Church and his arguments in favour of the maintenance of its ecclesiastical structure intact (a structure that the communist authorities wished to integrate by force within the framework of Romanian Orthodoxy) caused the communist authorities in Bucharest to react by shows of brutal force. For example, because of the police assault on the pontifical envoy's residence in Predeal, on May 11, 1949, both the regent of the Nunciature, Monsignor O'Hara, and the secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature, Bishop John Columbus Kirk (1912–2004), another member of the higher clergy of the Catholic Church in the United States, had to spend the whole night in the lounge of the mountain villa, surrounded by secret service agents and

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interracial understanding, erecting, during his episcopate, the Cathedral of Christ the King in Atlanta, exactly on the spot where the Ku Klux Klan meetings had been held. His experience in the Orthodox environment fostered a genuine openness, a development of the ecumenical spirit. It was not by chance that, at the end of his life, he wrote a preface to the book of Bea 1963.

<sup>5</sup> In the 1920s–30s, the successive leaders of the Nunciature in Bucharest were the following Italian archbishops: Francesco Marmaggi (1920–23), Archbishop Titular of Hadrianopolis in Haemimonto (Edirne), whom the Roman Church afterwards assigned with diplomatic missions in Central European countries in the period between 1923–1939 (he was nuncio in Czechoslovakia until 1928 and, then, in Poland); Angelo Maria Dolci (1923–33), as of 1914 vicar apostolic of Constantinople and titular of the Archdiocese of Gerapoli, distinguished himself at the time of the First World War, as a result of the intervention of Pope Benedict XV, through his contribution to the rescue of the Romanian prisoners from Santo Stefano; in the mid–1930s, Valerio Valeri (1933–36), Archbishop Titular of Ephesus and apostolic delegate to Egypt and Arabia, former auditor at the Apostolic Nunciature in France during 1921–27, a diplomatic mission that he tied his destiny to from 1936 on, the policy he promoted as pontifical nuncio to France, in 1936–44, which, at that time, was in line with the position of the Holy See, being condemned after the war by Charles de Gaulle, president of the provisional Government of the French Republic, who accused him of collaboration with the Vichy regime. For a general outlook on this issue, see De Marchi 1957; De Marchi, Filippazzi 2006; Doboş 2013, 32.

<sup>6</sup> Decree no. 358 of 1 December 1948.

<sup>7</sup> Decree no. 151 of 17 July 1948 and Decree no. 177 of 4 August 1948; Decree no. 178, 4 August 1948.



policemen, until the belated intervention of the Protocol Office of the Romanian Foreign Ministry. The excuse for this flagrant violation of international diplomatic norms was an alleged lack of communication with the Ministry of the Interior, which was responsible for this action.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, in the late 1940s, the pontifical diplomatic envoys to Romania were viewed with increasing suspicion for the „subversive“ activity, contrary to the state policy, they were carrying out, particularly in light of the fact that the majority of the staff of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bucharest consisted of Americans. In April 1949, before the assault on the pontifical envoy's residence in Predeal, a report from the Romanian intelligence service recommended the „liquidation of the papal Nunciature and the implementation of all of the consequences deriving from the repeal of the Concordat.”<sup>9</sup> The unilateral severance of diplomatic relations was just a first step. In July 1950, the pontifical regent was forced to leave Romania,<sup>10</sup> the burden of representing the Catholic Church here being temporarily assumed by the chaplain to the Italian Church in Bucharest, Clemente Gatti (until his arrest by the communist authorities, in March 1951).<sup>11</sup>

For our present approach, which aims to highlight a number of issues related to the policy of the Holy See towards Romania and the Romanians after 1950, a policy focused on the constant idea of supporting the Catholic Church and the Greek-Catholic Church, which had become clandestine in the regime of popular democracy, it is interesting to analyse the data provided by the document published in the annex below. This document represents an informative note of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, received on February 7, 1952, from its Embassy in Madrid and sent on February 18 by the central office in Rome to the diplomatic representations in Bucharest and Washington, as well as to

<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the problem, see Turcuş 2015, 377–384.

<sup>9</sup> For more information, see Bucur 2000, 111–121.

<sup>10</sup> On the evening of 4 July 1950, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest notified with a *note verbale* sent to the Apostolic Nunciature that the diplomatic staff of this mission – the nunciature counsellor and chargé d'affaires ad interim (regent) Bishop Gerald Patrick O'Hara, the ecclesiastical judge-uditor Guido del Mestri (originally from a noble Italian family in Banja-Luka, in present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina, but at that time in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with an education in the Jesuit environment in Vienna and then completed at the Capranica College in Rome and the Pontifical Gregorian University, ordained a priest on April 11, 1936, in the Patriarchal Basilica in the Lateran, initially sent on pastoral ministry to the Diocese of Gorizia, with diplomacy studies at the Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica in Rome, which he started attending in 1938, thereby acquiring the necessary training for diplomatic missions, such as that of attaché of the Apostolic Nunciature in Yugoslavia in 1940–1941, or of secretary of the apostolic delegation to Lebanon, where he stayed until 1943, appointed private chamberlain of the Pope on October 21, 1941, and sent to the Apostolic Nunciature in Romania, first as a secretary, on April 30, 1943, and then as an auditor) and the secretary of the Nunciature, John C. Kirk – no longer enjoyed the status of *personae gratae* in the context of the espionage process in which the Nunciature was considered a party that acted contrary to the interests of Romania. As a consequence, the above-mentioned diplomats were forced to pack up their personal effects and institutional documents and to go, on the evening of July 6, 1950, to the Gare du Nord, from where they took a train to Curtici, on the western border of Romania. Although the diplomats of the Bucharest regime declared in the European diplomatic environment on July 7, 1950, that it could not be definitively ruled out that the Government of the People's Republic of Romania would be able to admit, in time, the presence of a Vatican representative in Bucharest, the unilateral severance of relations was obvious, as were the tendencies of „nationalising“ the Catholic Church in Romania. See *România-Vatican* 2003, 359; Bozgan 2001, 130–154; Turcuş, Turcuş 2014, 809–815; Heger 2002, 379–380; Turcuş, Turcuş 2017 a, 239–271.

<sup>11</sup> Turcuş, Turcuş 2017 b, 155–171; Turcuş, Turcuş 2017 c, 255–271.

the permanent representative to N.A.T.O. The document refers to the activity, throughout 1952, of the former secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bucharest, Monsignor J. Kirk. As revealed by the document published in the annex, the former secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bucharest, who, prior to his mission in the capital city of Romania, was the secretary of Bishop O'Hara in Savannah, Georgia (US), had received from the Holy See the assignment of „head of the Romanian Catholic Mission in Spain.“ This aspect was particularly significant and delicate, since the Romanian community there<sup>12</sup> was the most powerful and important concentration of extreme right-wing, Legionary forces abroad, after World War II.

The concentration of Romanian far-right forces in Spain had been stimulated since World War II, when the government of Legionary Romania made a series of changes in its diplomatic apparatus, appointing to the capitals of the Axis countries or to those with a pro-Axis orientation, including to Spain, new heads of mission from the ranks of the Movement's leaders. Thus, in November 1940, Radu Ghenea was sent to the Romanian mission in Madrid and by the end of that month he had established optimal relations with Foreign Minister Ramón Serrano Suñer, head of the Spanish Phalanx. An interesting event that attested the ecumenical attitude adopted both by the representatives of the Romanian far-right government, which enjoyed undeniable support from the Orthodox priesthood, and by the Spanish Catholic Church was the celebration dedicated to the commemoration of two years since the execution of Captain Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (on 29/30 November 1938). For that manifestation Ghenea obtained *nulla osta* from Suñer on the very day of 26 November 1940, when he was received in audience by the Spanish Foreign Minister. Advertising the event, the Spanish newspapers published eulogising articles dedicated to the „Captain,“ and a religious service was held at the San Jerónimo Church in Madrid, the last prayer being uttered by a Spanish Catholic bishop.<sup>13</sup> In addition, we would like to draw attention here to the church in which the memorial service was held, San Jerónimo el Real, the church of an old Hieronymite convent,<sup>14</sup> founded in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century by the

<sup>12</sup> Cerullo 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Many Spanish newspapers published articles, in those days, commemorating two years since Codreanu's death and depicting the turmoil Romania was experiencing at the time. For example, the newspaper „ABC. Diario ilustrado de informacion general,“ which appeared in Madrid, informed, in its issue of 29 November 1940, 5 about the events in Romania, regarding the revenge of Codreanu's death and the numerous assassinations, including the murder of historian and politician Nicolae Iorga.

<sup>14</sup> The Order of Saint Jerome or the Hieronymites (*Ordo Sancti Hieronymi*, O.S.H) – a cloistered religious order of the Roman Catholic Church, based on respect for the Rule of Saint Augustine, and having as an inspiring model for monastic life the 5<sup>th</sup> century sage and exegete of the Holy Scriptures, St. Jerome – was founded in the proximity of Toledo in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, being recognised on 18 November 1373 by the papal bull of Pope Gregory XI. What remains important for the history of the order – which, in 1415, obtained from the Pope the exempted status, no longer depending, thus, on the jurisdiction of the local bishop – is the particular attention that it received from the Kings of Spain. The monastic congregation was inextricably linked to the destiny of the Spanish monarchy and possessed some of the most important monasteries of the Iberian Peninsula (the *Royal Monastery of Santa María de Guadalupe* in Extremadura, is directly associated with the New World, including in terms of the name of the Caribbean island that is derived from it, and due to the fact that it was here that Christopher Columbus made his first pilgrimage a sign of thanksgiving for having discovered America in 1492; the *Royal Monastery of Santa Maria de Belém*, built in Lisbon, at the mouth of the River Tagus, in Manueline style, designed originally for the spiritual welfare of seafarers and navigators – it was here that Vasco da Gama and the members of his expedition prayed before setting off towards the

Castilian royalty in the vicinity of the royal Palace El Pardo, erected by order of Henry III of Castile in 1406. Built in Isabelline Gothic (or late-Gothic Castilian) style, the church had acquired special significance for the Spanish monarchy, being chosen for the investiture ceremony of the Princes of Asturias in 1528. When King Philip II transferred the Spanish court to Madrid, he built the Palace del Buen Retiro adjacent to the church, placing the royal bedroom right next to the rectory so he could listen to the religious service in bed. Not by chance, in an attempt to appropriate the symbolism of power, General Franco established his residence at the El Pardo Palace when he became head of the Spanish state, and the church was his favourite for official ceremonies, at a time when there was still no imposing cathedral in Madrid: Santa Maria la Real de La Almudena was consecrated only by John Paul II in 1993. The ecclesiastical edifice that had served as a cathedral until then, the Church of San Isidro el Real, dedicated to the city's patron saint, St. Isidor, the protector of simple people, of workers and craftsmen suggested something altogether different than patronage over a thriving nobility. Therefore, the Church of San Jerónimo acquired, over the centuries, the role of a royal chapel and a church belonging to state and government officials. It was not by chance, if we are to return to the ceremony held here and dedicated to the commemoration of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, that the religious service was held in the Church of San Jerónimo, as this was the place of worship preferred by the state authorities for the masses celebrated here, to which the Francoist government paid special attention.

Dismissed after the suppression of the Legionary Rebellion of January 21–23, 1941, Radu Ghenea remained in Spain, launching an important propaganda activity which supported the Legion and was directed against the Antonescu regime. In addition, several other members of the Romanian diplomatic mission in Madrid, Legionaries or supporters of the Movement (the commercial attaché Enescu, for example, or the poet Aron Cotruş, press attaché at that time), had formed here a resistance centre, by refusing to step down and expressing their confidence in the victory of the extreme right-wing forces.<sup>15</sup> Eventually, the situation was settled with the arrival in Madrid, in the second half of April 1941, of the minister sent by the Antonescu regime, Nicolae Gr. Dimitrescu, who would, however, later also thicken the ranks of Romanian emigration in Francoist Spain. Minister Dimitrescu had played, as is well known, an important role, endorsed by Mihai Antonescu, in the policy waged by the Bucharest regime for strengthening Romania's position in the sphere of international relations, proposing the concept of Latinity at European and world level, which, after all, was in perfect agreement with the Roman imperial idea promoted by the Mussolinian regime. It is not by chance that the Antonescu regime campaigned for closer relations with Francoist Spain, where Legionaries made numerous attempts to denigrate the „Conducătorul's“ Romania, and the conclusion of the cultural agreement of March 5,

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Orient in 1497 – and known as Mosteiro dos Jerónimos. It was turned by Philip II of Spain, in 1604, during the period of the Iberian Union, into a royal necropolis, a role that it would retain after Portuguese independence was secured in 1640; last but not least, the famous royal necropolis of El Escorial, built by Philip II of Spain, which was also a Hieronymite monastery, the order remaining undeniably tied to the Spanish royalty). In addition to that, Hieronymites played an important role in the spread of Christianity to the New World, first in the Antilles and the Caribbean (it should be noted that many of the bishops of Santo Domingo were Hieronymites, for example, Luis de Figueroa, appointed in 1523. At that time, his authority also encompassed the Islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico).

<sup>15</sup> For more information, see Calafeteanu 2007, 65–69.

1942, based precisely on cultural cooperation and predicated on the idea of common Latin origins and the role of neo-Latinity at the two frontiers of Europe,<sup>16</sup> was a genuine success. Signed by Minister Nicolae Dimitrescu and the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Serrano Suñer, the agreement opened the way for a massive project of Romanian book translation (especially literature and history) and publication at the publishing houses of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>17</sup> Here was, in fact, the basis of the huge Romanian editorial presence, subsequently supported, along the lines established during the war, by the right-wing émigrés who took refuge in Spain in the post-war decades.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, it is known that as of February 1943, Mihai Antonescu launched a policy of setting up a „Latin axis,”<sup>19</sup> which would encompass Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and Romania, in order to save the country from a disastrous destiny at the end of the war. To this end, Mihai Antonescu had consulted Italy’s Minister in Bucharest, Renato Bova Scoppa, but Ciano made negotiations drag on and Mussolini’s dismissal rendered them an utter failure. Mihai Antonescu continued his inquiries and attempts to approach the Allies through the papal nuncio Andrea Cassulo, but also through a number of diplomats, such as the Foreign Minister of Turkey in Bucharest, the Romanian Minister in Lisbon, Victor Cădere, or Romania’s envoy to Madrid, Nicolae Dimitrescu.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the period in which Nicolae Dimitrescu was at the forefront of the Romanian mission to the capital city of Spain was one of profound consolidation of Romanian - Spanish cultural relations and of Romanian propaganda in Francoist Spain, based on the ideological similarities between the regimes of the two military men, the Romanian Marshal and *el Generalísimo*, and of the relentless promotion of the principle of Latinity as a means of historical legitimization. On this institutional basis and benefiting from a right-wing government that was hostile to communism, the Romanian emigration of Legionary extraction thrived in Spain in the post-war years, attracting, not by chance, the attention of the Holy See, which was concerned to uphold those parts of the exile that were hostile to Moscow’s policy of destroying the authority of the church, the difference between Orthodoxy and Catholicism being of lesser importance in this context. The Legion’s activity in exile in the 1950s focused especially on Spain, where the political context was favourable. In addition

<sup>16</sup> Significant for the spirit in which the negotiations were carried out are the statements made by Serrano Suñer, when the agreement was concluded. He spoke about the relationship between the two countries, established during the time of „the glorious imperial era of Trajan;” see Dumitrescu 2008, 56.

<sup>17</sup> The agreement was the climax of the Romanian propaganda in Spain, centred on the figures of the two leaders, Antonescu and Franco. In the Spanish press of the time there were published articles which insisted on Romania’s anti-communist role, on the European mission of the Romanian people. In addition, interuniversity and inter academic exchanges were stimulated (a number of Spanish academics were received in the Romanian Academy and vice versa, especially in the Spanish Academy of Pharmacy), the task of promoting Romanian culture in Spain being entrusted to cultural counsellor Alexandru Busuioceanu, who was invited by the University of Madrid to deliver lectures on the origin and Latinity of the Romanians. In addition, following the cultural agreement, the Romanian language was introduced as a field of specialisation along with other neo-Romance languages. Also as a consequence of the agreement, the „Traian” Association was created in Valdes House on November 24, 1942, intended to support bilateral cultural relations, alongside the Hispano-Romanian Association in Madrid, see Dumitrescu 2008, 55–61.

<sup>18</sup> We should mention the post-war magazines, such as „Destin” or „Fapta” and a massive policy of literary translations from Romanian into Spanish, see Cerullo 2015, 85–95.

<sup>19</sup> See also Calafeteanu 1993, 154–156.

<sup>20</sup> Diaconescu 1997, 167–172.



to that, there was a certain willingness on the part of the Catholic Church to unite all the available forces, in an ecumenical manner, against the atheist communists. It should be noted that over time, numerous leaders of the Movement found shelter and championed their ideas in the Romanian community in Madrid. For instance, Grigore Manoilescu, towards the end of his life, was the former director of the newspaper „Buna Vestire,” a close friend of Sima’s, a former director of the Romanian Institute in Berlin, which had been established by his father-in-law, the linguist Sextil Pușcariu, in August 1940. He was a member of the National Romanian Government in Vienna, established in September 1944 as an alternative to the Soviet occupation. He died in Madrid in 1963. Other Romanian émigrés included: Horia Stamat, a writer and journalist who lived in Madrid in 1951–61, the editor of the magazines „Fapta” and „Libertatea Românească,” and of the publication „Oriente Europeo,” and the founder of the Spanish literary review „Punta Europa”; Crișu Axente, who passed away in Madrid, in 1953, and who was a former editor-in-chief of the magazine „Axa” and a collaborator of Aron Cotruș to the Romanian-language channel of the national radio station in Madrid; Vasile Florescu, Ion Brașoveanu, Alice Ponta, the wife of Petre Ponta, Valeriu Vințan, Ion Baicu, Zoe Sturdza and, as of 1956, the commander of the Legion, Horia Sima, who settled in the Iberian capital, the Francoist regime granting him the status of a political refugee. Sima had the opportunity to teach a class at the University of Barcelona (his home in Jorge Juan no.183 became a meeting place for the exiled members of the Movement). In Spain, to which Sima tied his destiny till his death (which occurred in 1993), his wife, Elvira Sima died on April 13, 1974. They were both buried at Torredembarra, near Barcelona, in the region of Tarragona. Those who chose the path of exile to Spain included a number of the supporters of right-wing ideas and intellectuals who were hostile to the communist regime that had been set up in Romania after 1948, such as Alexandru Busuioceanu (whose name was inextricably linked to the creation of the Department of Romanian Language and Literature at the University of Madrid), Alexandru Ciorănescu (who settled, in December, 1948, in Tenerife, where he taught for thirty years Italian, Spanish and Portuguese literature, Romanian language and comparative literature), Gheorghe Uscătescu (Chair of Philosophy at the Complutense University of Madrid, his illustrious predecessors being Ortega y Gasset and Eugenio D’Ors), and Vintilă Horia (who settled there in 1953),<sup>21</sup> with a significant contribution to the promotion of Romanian culture on the Iberian Peninsula.

The document published in the annex indicates that the director of the Romanian Catholic Mission to Spain, Monsignor Kirk, introduced himself in the diplomatic milieus from the Spanish capital alongside the person who had represented for years Romania’s interests in Madrid, Minister Dimitrescu. This demonstrated the Vatican diplomacy’s desire to cultivate those Romanian political forces that resided outside the People’s Republic and that could always be a possible alternative to the power imposed by Moscow. We would also like to point out that the mission that Monsignor Kirk had received from the Holy See was not at all haphazard. It must be correlated with the Apostolic See’s policy towards the entire Romanian emigration at that time. In fact, as the published document makes clear, the mission bestowed on him by the Holy Father was centred in Spain because the right-wing Francoist government, close to and well-disposed towards the demands of the

<sup>21</sup> Behring 2001; Cerullo 2018, 39–41; Cerullo 2016, 273–278.

Catholic Church, provided the support necessary to sustain the religious life and faith of the communities in the countries where the Stalinist and atheist domination of Moscow had been installed. However, it was to include „all of the countries of Western Europe where there are Romanians,“ with the particularly interesting mention that its support was granted both to the *United* believers (the Greek-Catholics) and to the *schismatics*, being backed up with *American help*, as the document states. Spiritual assistance was also provided to the Romanian far right, in the sense of „an effort to pacify and unify the different political tendencies that divided the different Romanian communities.“ It is interesting to note that the Holy See promoted after 1948 similar links with the Romanian emigration of Legionary extraction in Austria, a state known for its strategic position near the Iron Curtain and an entrance gate to the West for all those who professed anti-communist ideas and sought refuge abroad. The Romanian committee organised by the Legionaries in Salzburg as early as June 1945 – set up in the „Bristol“ Hotel in the Marquartplatz, inhabited by Americans, who had placed at the disposal of all the national committees rooms where they could carry out their work, a committee led by Grigore Filiti and Marcel Ghinea, and designed to protect the social welfare of the refugees and to procure the necessary documents for them – was supported in their humanitarian projects by the Romanian Catholic Mission in Austria, which was provisionally headed by the priest Octavian Bârlea for a period of time.<sup>22</sup> Based on the subsidies offered by the Vatican mission, the material means were ensured for the operation in Salzburg of a barrack serving as a dormitory for refugees. This Romanian asylum in Salzburg (located in Elisabeth strasse no. 38) was inaugurated in September 1949. Here many Romanian refugees and members of the Movement found shelter. It should be remembered that the above-mentioned Romanian Committee in Salzburg, which functioned in the 1950s, was also involved in the promotion of Legionary texts. For this purpose, a printing press located on Ignaz Harrer Strasse no. 75 was used. The Holy See's appointment of Florian Müller – a priest of Latin rite born in the Dobruja region and a good connoisseur of the Romanian realities – at the head of the Romanian Catholic Mission in Austria, in November 1949, signalled an even closer involvement of the

<sup>22</sup> Octavian Bârlea (1913–2005) resided then in Kronberg, Germany, attached to the American Archbishop of German origin Aloysius Muench (1889–1962), head of the Vatican Mission in Germany as apostolic visitor and then apostolic nuncio in the F.R.G., sent specifically for assisting the masses of refugee from Eastern Europe. A Greek-Catholic priest trained in Rome at the Pio Romeno College, at the De Propaganda Fide and at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, he had shown as early as in his doctoral writings a remarkable openness towards ecumenism, dealing with problems related to *The Orthodox Confession*. In the fall of 1945, he was entrusted by the Holy See to look after the Romanian refugees to Germany and Austria, and, in the service of the said Vatican mission, he was helped, for seven years, by the Jesuit priests Ivo Zeiger, rector of the Collegium Germanicum in Rome, by Robert Lieber, private secretary to Pope Pius XII, and Emil Herman, rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. His name is linked to the publication of the newspaper „Îndreptar. Foaie pentru gând și faptă creștinească,“ in 1950–53, in Freising. In 1952–54, Octavian Bârlea was in Paris at the head of the Greek-Catholic Romanian Mission in France, being also vice president, under Kirk's leadership, of the Romanian Catholic Mission for Europe. In 1955, he was transferred to Rome, as editor of the Vatican Radio, and in 1957 he set up here, with the support of Cardinal Tisserant, the Romanian Academic Society (conceived as a form of anti-communist resistance through culture, as well as a place of rapprochement between the two Romanian Churches), publishing an impressive collection of related *Acta*. Appointed by Paul VI apostolic visitor to the Greek-Catholic Romanians in the U.S., he helped establish the Romanian-American Academy of Sciences and Arts (A.R.A.) in 1975. In 1978 he settled in Munich as rector of the Greek-Catholic Romanian Mission in Germany. For the biography of the Monsignor, see Fărcaș 2017.

Congregation for the Oriental Churches, led by Cardinal Tisserant (he was its secretary in the period between 1936 and 1959, the prefect dignity being assumed by the sovereign pontiff at that time) in the support offered to the Romanian refugees. It appears that the regent of the Nunciature in Bucharest, Monsignor O'Hara, had inspired this initiative, insisting in those years on the orientation of the pastoral mission towards the emigration that needed spiritual and material support. Florian Müller was expelled from Romania on January 7, 1949, together with a group of nuns who were involved in the educational system of Galaţi, Brăila, and Craiova (in a context in which confessional education was suppressed and its material basis was nationalised). After a period of time in which he stayed in Rome and acquired a deeper understanding of the Oriental rite at the Pio Romeno College, he was assigned to help the Romanian emigration in Brazil and he even moved for a period of time to Rio and São Paulo but, then, Cardinal Tisserant entrusted him, on behalf of the Oriental Congregation, to take over the leadership of the Romanian Catholic Mission in Austria, being commissioned to serve as priest of all the Romanian refugees, regardless of denomination (Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, or Catholic), and being able to hold the Mass in both of these rites. It should be noted that chaplain Müller established the headquarters of the Romanian Catholic Mission in Austria in Salzburg. On the basis of a letter of recommendation from Monsignor O'Hara, he intervened with the Austrian branch of the American Caritas, N.C.W.C. (National Catholic Welfare Conference) and its director there, Monsignor Flim, in order to provide financial support to the Romanian asylum. It was provided with a cafeteria and a dining room arranged in a bunker in the vicinity, which operated in 1950–55.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the Holy See's appointment of Monsignor Kirk as the person in charge of providing spiritual and material assistance to the Romanians in Western Europe, regardless of whether they were Catholic, Greek Catholic or Orthodox, was merely the continuation of a policy launched by the Apostolic See as early as 1949, in support of the anti-communist emigration. In the context of the unilateral severance of relations by Romania, a country that was subservient to Moscow, the Vatican responded by appointing a representative for that part of Romania with which relations and connections could be maintained. The first step had been made for the Romanian refugees in Austria, where the establishment of an asylum was a priority, and it was not by chance that the Romanian Catholic Mission set up an asylum in Madrid, on Calle Homero 12, in the summer of 1951. Many exiles, including Legionaries, found shelter here. The initiative was linked to the name of the priest Florian Müller, who travelled to Madrid in January 1951 to establish an asylum of the Romanian Catholic Mission and engaged in extremely difficult negotiations with the Spanish Justice Minister. The asylum began operating on July 31, 1951, when the first group of tenants

<sup>23</sup> In 1953 Fr. Müller became leader of the Romanian Catholic Mission in Germany, initially based in Tattenhausen, near Rosenheim, and then in Munich, since the spring of 1954. When Austrian independence was achieved following the signing of the Treaty of May 1955 and the occupation troops subsequently retreated, American contingents were also withdrawn from there, and the American Caritas ceased its activity in Austria in the autumn of 1955. Although the last aid for refugees was received, via this channel, in the summer of 1955, the Salzburg asylum was closed down only in 1957, after being left with very few residents, and the Romanian Salzburg Committee of the Movement ceased its activity in 1958. For a memorial perspective, see Mailat 1978.

arrived in Madrid, some of them from the Romanian emigration in Austria.<sup>24</sup> The rental of the building in Calle Homero no. 12 was made by Fr. Amalio Orduña (a Jesuit monk expelled from Romania in 1949),<sup>25</sup> and the first tenants contributed with the practical experience they had acquired by organising the previous settlement. Father Orduña and the Greek-Catholic priest Alexandru Mircea supported the functioning of the establishment, which lasted until 1967, having been run by George Demetrescu, vice-president of the Romanian community in Spain.

What is also interesting is how Monsignor Kirk's mission dedicated to the Romanian emigration in Western Europe was perceived by the Romanian far-right refugees there, most of whom were Orthodox. Faced with their implacable condemnation by the regime of communist inspiration, they saw the relationship with the Apostolic See and its ecumenical and assistive attitude as a possible legitimisation of the exiled Romanians before the Western Bloc states. The unification of the Romanian Catholic Missions in the diaspora, under the authority of Monsignor Kirk, opened up the possibility for the exiled Romanians, regardless of confession, to have a central religious organisation on behalf of which they could bring the current problems of the Romanian exile to the attention of the authorities of different countries and discuss them, in parallel with the religious issue in Romania (especially the persecutions to which the Church United with Rome had been subjected), as well as with problems related to the political situation of the country, subservient to Moscow. In the eyes of the Romanian exile, Monsignor Kirk was a tireless advocate of the national cause. In addition, the unification of the Romanian Catholic Missions had been achieved under the leadership of an American prelate weighted heavily in the eyes of the Western governments. There was thus an authority that could represent the Romanians in exile in those years, somewhat similar to the way in which the Roman Church had supported the emigration of other peoples that had been placed under Soviet influence at the end of World War II, peoples that had a Catholic tradition, such as the Poles or the Hungarians. In a way, the Holy See's concern for the Romanian diaspora was similar to the attention paid to the Ukrainians, who had experienced religious Union.<sup>26</sup> The problems of the Romanian exile were supported, thus, in the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, Italy and, last

<sup>24</sup> The first installed in the asylum were the group of people who were supposed to organise the institution, the engineer Tului Basiu, who had gathered experience in Salzburg, and Vasile Florescu, famous for the meals he prepared in the kitchen of Salzburg, then Ion Fleşeriu, Ion Bozosan, Ion Braşoveanu, Florea Stancu. The Legionaries opened the store of colonial merchandise „Los Cárpatos“ in Madrid, in 1952. They were later joined by Valeriu Vinţan, Ion Baicu and Niculae Borca, coming from France and Germany. See Mailat 1978.

<sup>25</sup> Birtz 2006, 14–15; Botiza 2005, 144. Fr. Orduña was the chaplain of the Romanian community in Spain, having served as late as the early 1970s. On September 13, 1970 he spoke at the inauguration of the monument erected in memory of the Legionaries Ion Moţa and Vasile Marin, in Majadahonda, insisting, in his speech, on the very element that drew the Romanian far right close to the Roman Church – defending the Cross and the anti-atheist and anti-communist attitude: „I see [Moţa and Marin] supporting the Cross. What did they come to Spain for? They heard the Cross was being attacked here. They heard that the enemies of the Cross were taking down, everywhere, the crosses that stood on the belfries of our churches, because people wanted to tear them down. Some fell. Many fell. The intention was to tear them all down”. See also [www.mişcarea.net/1-cultul-dela-majadahonda.htm](http://www.mişcarea.net/1-cultul-dela-majadahonda.htm) (2 October 2019).

<sup>26</sup> In fact, when the mission of Monsignor Kirk came to an end in the mid-1950s (the context was, of course, different, and the participants in the Cold War now relied on negotiations), the Congregation for the Oriental Churches resumed the system of fragmenting the Romanian Catholic Missions, removing the central leadership and subordinating each mission directly to the local bishop.



but not least, in Spain, where Monsignor Kirk had been received in the audience by General Franco as soon as he was entrusted with the mission by the Apostolic See. In fact, as regards his reception in audience by *el Generalísimo* and the position of the Vatican's diplomatic envoy, the document emphasises tersely, for the information of the Italian Foreign Affairs missions abroad, that the statements made in the press by the American prelate were „too Francoist“ for a hierarch of the Roman Church sent on a mission by the Apostolic See and that Monsignor Kirk told his interlocutor at the Italian Embassy in Madrid, with whom he had met on February 7, 1952, at the onset of the prelate's mission in Spain (from February 1, 1951 to April 30, 1954 the Italian ambassador to Francoist Spain was Francesco Maria Taliani de Marchio, representative of the De Gasperi Government), that he had not informed the Nunciature beforehand. He also commented that the time had come to tell the truth about communists and anti-communists.

In addition, besides the fact that he came from the high ecclesiastical hierarchy in the United States, certain elements of Monsignor Kirk's biography clearly indicate that he was the right person for such a mission, conceived by the Holy See as an alternative to the impossibility of running a diplomatic representation in Bucharest. Monsignor John Columbus Kirk, the son of Emory and Pearl Richards Kirk, came from a Methodist family in Athens, Georgia, a city that gravitates around Atlanta forming the cultural and economic centre of its metropolitan area, which developed in conjunction with the University of Georgia, a state institution of higher education whose Charter dates back to 1785. He was attracted to the Catholic faith during his college years in Baltimore (Maryland) at St. Mary's University,<sup>27</sup> where he obtained a degree in liberal arts, specialising in philosophy, with a relative interest in classical disciplines. The fact that he had become a Catholic – the only Catholic in a family with a strong Methodist background – after he made Catholic friends in college and attended, together with them, the Mass specific to the Roman Catholic Church, remains an important element in the biography of the prelate,<sup>28</sup> the experience of religious opening and the ecumenical spirit proved ever since his youth having been decisive for his election by the pontiff, Pius XII, who knew him closely, for a mission to support the Romanian emigration with a strong Orthodox component. Returning to the biography of Monsignor John Columbus Kirk, it should be noted that he chose the sacerdotal vocation and the Catholic religion after his period in St. Mary's University, as he completed his training at St. Charles College (Catonsville, Maryland), a second-level seminary designed for teenagers who manifested their calling to the priesthood. This seminary had been founded in the 1830s thanks to the efforts of the family of Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1737–1832), signer of the Declaration of Independence for Maryland

<sup>27</sup> St. Mary's University of Maryland is located in the first colony of Maryland, St. Mary's City – the fourth colony in British North America and also the first capital of Maryland, considered the birthplace of religious freedom in America. As early as 1791, the Seminary of St. Sulpice or St. Mary's Seminary functioned in Baltimore, a Roman Catholic educational institution elevated to the rank of University in 1805 under the name of St. Mary's University. Not by chance, for the destiny of the American clergyman we are discussing here, St. Mary's City was deemed to be the hotbed of Catholicism in America, its supporters seeking the restoration of Roman Catholic worship as a state religion (it should be noted that Colonial Maryland was founded as a Catholic colony in opposition to the Bill of Rights of 1689, reimposing Catholicism as a state religion). See Cordell et alii 1907, 5–8; Greenwell 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Greear 2004.

and the only Roman-Catholic who voted for independence and signed the document.<sup>29</sup> After completing his studies at the University of Georgia and the University of South Carolina, John Columbus Kirk was ordained a priest at St. Joseph's Church in Athens in 1944.<sup>30</sup> It is significant that the small Catholic Church of St. Joseph, founded in the Diocese of Savannah in 1881, was the first place of worship of the Roman Church in Athens, and for several decades it was only visited by priests, who celebrated the Mass on a monthly basis or less frequently. The place of worship had a resident priest only in 1911 and a corresponding edifice in 1913, the parish having at first a strong missionary component (its ministry extended over 23 counties in the northern part of Georgia). The important role of the young priest and the missionary vocation of his activity – Kirk was the first ordained priest at St. Joseph's – conferred him a certain importance in the Diocese of Savannah, so that the young priest became secretary of Bishop Gerald O'Hara and followed him on his mission to Romania in 1947. It is interesting to note that both prelates – after all, among the few North American diplomats of the Vatican at the time (they were among the first North American clergymen drafted by the Holy See in its diplomatic apparatus, in light of the victory of the allies in World War II and of the more delicate position of the Pope in the public opinion, which frequently accused him of having adopted a pro-German attitude during the conflict) – were initially summoned by Pope Pius XII, in May 1946, to be sent as envoys of the pope to Albania, but considering the persecution of the Roman Church there, the pontiff changed the mission's destination to Romania. In addition, we should emphasise the importance of the mission that O'Hara and Kirk had in the part of Europe that was under Soviet influence, Monsignor Kirk being elevated to the rank of papal Chamberlain with the title of *reverendissimo* in 1946, immediately after his arrival in Rome. A connoisseur of English, Italian, French, Spanish and Latin, Monsignor Kirk was the English teacher of Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII.

The appointment of Monsignor Kirk as leader of the Romanian Catholic Mission in Spain, who was responsible for the spiritual and material assistance of all the refugees from Romania to Western Europe, regardless of their religion, was conceived by the Apostolic See also in the context of the resumption, after the war, of the long tradition of the International Eucharistic Congresses. Starting in 1881 – in fact the year when Pope Leon XIII opened the Vatican Archives to the public – the series of eucharistic congresses represented, after all, the international expression of one of the most important doctrines of the Roman Church, the testimony of the real presence of the Saviour in the Eucharist. The first such congress, also due to the initiative of the French clergy and faithful, took place in Lille, on June 21, 1881, and so did the vast majority of the first congresses, held at first every year. However, the patron saint of the Eucharistic congresses is the Spanish mystic Saint Paschal Baylón, O. F. M., (1540–1592), known for his zeal of eucharistic worship. In 1910,

<sup>29</sup> The seminary was run by the Sulpicians (members of the Society of the Priests of Saint-Sulpice, the *Societas Presbyterorum a Santo Sulpitio*, or the *Compagnie des Prêtres de Saint-Sulpice*, a society of apostolic life of the Roman Catholic Church that takes its name from the Parisian church of Saint-Sulpice. It was founded in France in 1641, with the purpose of educating the priests, was divided later into three provinces, with vast areas of operation: France, Canada, and the United States), and received the name of St. Charles after the name of the benefactor. See Sergeant 1833; Devanter 1975; Icard 1886. For further data on the society and the way priests are trained even at present, see *La formation sacerdotale* 2013–2014.

<sup>30</sup> John Columbus 2004.

the 21<sup>st</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was first held on the North American continent. In 1893, the 8<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was the first held outside Europe, in Jerusalem. World War I interrupted the series of these religious reunions, being resumed with a biennial periodicity in the interwar years, some held in locations on different continents, in Chicago, Sydney or Tunisia. The 25<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress was organised in Lourdes between 22 and 25 July 1914, and after the war, the 26<sup>th</sup> was held in Rome on 24–29 May 1922, the chosen theme being that of *The Peaceful Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist*. The last interwar Congress, the 34<sup>th</sup>, took place in Budapest, and the manifestations held on May 25–30, 1938, subsumed to the theme of *The Eucharist, The Bond of Love*, were attended by the future Pope Pius XII (Cardinal Pacelli) as papal legate. When the tradition of congresses was resumed after an interruption of more than a decade, much attention was paid to the 35<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, held from May 27 to June 1, 1952 in Barcelona, the country of the patron saint of those reunions. Its symbolic theme was *Peace*. In addition, the Holy Father opted for a staunch Catholic and anti-communist European country. Hundreds of Catholic bishops attended the meeting, including North American Cardinals Francis Spellman of New York and Samuel Stritch of Chicago, but unfortunately the participation of the Roman Catholic prelates of communist-controlled Eastern European countries was limited. It is in this context that we must consider the mission that Monsignor Kirk, an American prelate familiar with the issues of Romania, received from the Apostolic See<sup>31</sup> at that particular time and the interesting perception of

<sup>31</sup> The Eucharistic Congress was attended by Monsignor Bârlea as vice-president of the Romanian Catholic Mission for Europe. In fact, it was also in 1952 that the volume *Biserica Română Unită. Două sute cincispece ani de istorie. Documente* was published in Madrid, including texts by Monsignor Aloisie Tăutu, Carol Capros, Flaviu Popan, Octavian Bârlea, Alexandru Mircea, Pamfil Cârnațiu and Mircea Todericiu. It should be noted that the activities promoted by the Romanian emigration to Spain in the early 1950s included the organisation of a Romanian week in Madrid, on 7–13 May 1953. During that week, exhibitions were opened (for example, the exhibition of Romanian painting, sculpture and crafts housed by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Madrid), conferences on Romanian history were held (among those who spoke at those conferences were Antonio Tovar, rector of the University of Salamanca, Ernest Gamilscheg, Mircea Eliade, Iosif Constantin Drăgan, Ciril Popovici, etc.), aerobatics demonstrations were organised under the patronage of the Spanish aviation, on 13 May the mayor of the Iberian capital gave a reception in honour of the members of the Romanian community. On May 10 a Te Deum was celebrated by a group of Greek-Catholic priests who came from the mission to Madrid in the Church of San Francisco el Grande and were presided over by the apostolic nuncio, Monsignor Gaetano Cicognani, and the pontifical delegate for the Romanians, Monsignor Kirk, the service being accompanied by the choir of the Orthodox Church in Paris. The Romanian emigration strove to make sure that the events would be massively reflected in the Spanish press, on the radio and in cinema newsreels, and the propaganda brochure ...*Y existimos (Yet We Are Still Alive)* was distributed on this occasion. Over the following years, the Romanian community in Spain was distinguished by its participation in the Second International Congress of the Latin Union, which took place in Madrid on May 10, 1954, being represented by a delegation headed by Aron Cotruș and composed of George Demetrescu, Fr. Alexandru Mircea, then rector of the Catholic Mission for the Romanians in Spain, Traian Popescu, director of the „Carpații” publishing house. They were joined by the Romanians who had immigrated to France, Constantin Arsene, director of „Curierul Românesc,” and Captain Cristescu, editor of the „Chemarea” newspaper. In the summer of 1956, the Romanian diaspora in Spain participated with a Romanian handicraft stand and with folk and gastronomic manifestations in the Third International Agricultural Exhibition, organised in Madrid, at Casa del Campo, on May 23–June 22. June 21 was established as the day for celebrating Free Romania. The day of May 10 was also celebrated in 1958, when a Romanian philatelic exhibition was inaugurated in the Royal House of the Post Office in Madrid, presenting early issues and valuable stamps from Moldova, the United Principalities, the Principality and, then, Kingdom of Romania. The opening of the exhibition was graced by the presence

Spain's position imparted by the Italian diplomats to the politicians in Italy. Considering the mission of Monsignor Kirk, at least from a formal point of view, as abnormal rather than normal, the Italian diplomacy insisted precisely on the connection between the mission of the American prelate and the unique position that the Francoist government had assumed toward the countries behind the Iron Curtain, above all, the special „status“ granted by Madrid to the former diplomatic representations of the states that were now under Moscow's influence. That is why the American high prelate discussed with the former Romanian ambassador in the Iberian capital, N. Dimitrescu, all the problems related to the Romanian community and was constantly accompanied by him in the diplomatic environment there. In addition, the government in Madrid had unconditionally received the right wing and far right emigration from beyond the Iron Curtain and had granted due honour, according to their former dignities, to the foremost representatives of the anti-communists in those countries (for instance, the royal family of Bulgaria<sup>32</sup> and His Majesty, Archduke Otto von Habsburg, the last Crown Prince of the Austro-Hungarian throne, on the occasion of his wedding).<sup>33</sup> Prince Nicolae of Romania had established residence here in 1951, having requested and received even financial support from General Franco, as did the former Minister of Foreign Affairs from the time of the legionary national state, Prince Mihail Sturdza (a member of the Legionary Movement).<sup>34</sup> Moreover, as the Italian diplomatic envoys in Madrid considered, it was no accident that in Spanish Foreign Affairs, Minister Prat<sup>35</sup> held the position of director of Affairs for America and was also an expert on Balkan

of the director-general of the Spanish Post Office, Bulgaria's Queen Mother, the delegate of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minister Prat.

<sup>32</sup> The Royal House of Bulgaria (of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha), headed by Simeon II of Bulgaria (b. 1937 in Sofia), who ruled the state in 1943–46, initially with his uncle Prince Kiril as regent, left Bulgaria in 1946, when the popular referendum that year had decided to abolish the monarchy. Avoiding forced abdication, Simeon and his family left the country, taking refuge first in Egypt, then settling in Madrid. For more information, Pérez-Maura 2002.

<sup>33</sup> The document refers to his wedding to Princess Regina of Saxe-Meiningen, held in Nancy on 10 May 1951. As regards the position of Franco and his government on the archduke's situation, it should be noted that, in 1961, Francisco Franco offered him to become King of Spain after his death, Otto von Habsburg declining the offer. Related to the Romanian participation in the 35<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress in Barcelona – a participation with an obvious Orthodox majority, but also with a massive concentration of Legionary elements, of representatives of the Romanian right and of Greek-Catholics under the patronage of Monsignor Kirk – Archduke Otto of Habsburg, who was the head of the Hungarian delegation, which was to follow the Romanian one in introducing itself to Pope Pius XII, allegedly claimed, rather insidiously, that „I had no idea Romania was a Catholic country.“ The vice-president of the Romanian community in Spain, George Demetrescu, aptly replied that „for the Romanians Christ is unique and we shall enter any Christian temple for His worship or defence.“ On Otto de Habsburg, see Pérez-Maura 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Prince Nicholas received the honours due to his rank in Spain (for example, in February 1952, when he arrived from Paris – according to the Spanish press – he was greeted at the airport by the representative of Foreign Affairs, the Marquis of Prat), see ABC. *Diario ilustrado de informacion general*, Madrid, 5 de febrero de 1952, 21.

<sup>35</sup> Pedro de Prat y Soutzo, Marqués de Prat y Nantouillet was born in Athens on June 23, 1892, and died in Madrid on November 16, 1969. He was the son of a Spanish minister plenipotentiary to Greece, the marquis Pedro Miguel de Prat y Nantouillet (1847–1916) – previously Spain's ambassador to China and, as of 1899, Spanish minister plenipotentiary to Stockholm and Copenhagen. He got married in Athens, on June 2, 1891, to Elise Pericles Soutzo (b. December 25, 1863), daughter of Pericles (Ioannis) Soutzo (1829–1895) and Eleni (George) Ralli (b. 1838). The diplomat had, therefore, a natural understanding of the problems of the Balkans and an interest in issues of migration in the region, especially since, in the early 1940s, he had been the



issues. In addition, the Italian diplomacy suggested that the anti-communist attitude of Francoist Spain had reached such intense levels that on the occasion of New Year, 1952, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Madrid, Alberto Martín-Artajo,<sup>36</sup> criticised the system of the Atlantic Alliance for its defensive content, stating that, at that time, Christendom, as Spanish politicians believed, should actively seek the liberation of the countries oppressed by the Soviets. It seems that the position of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a remarkable echo among the emigration of those states and even the American propaganda radio station in Munich broadcast it massively beyond the Iron Curtain. The questions and clarifications requested by the embassies in Madrid in relation to these statements – with explicit reference to the liberation of the peoples beyond the Curtain – were answered by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a less formal manner, claiming that Minister Artajo had not discussed anything on this issue with the interested environments, but had expressed a series of spontaneous opinions. The conclusion of the Italian diplomacy was that Spain, which did not, at the time, have diplomatic representations in Moscow's satellite countries because of its right-wing government, could afford such extremist statements, which incited a rethinking of the international geopolitical structure and of the spheres of influence established after World War II. Those statements were somehow in line with the Spanish temperament and quixotism, while also being to the liking of the great power across the Atlantic.

The document published here also insists on another aspect of Monsignor Kirk's mission to Spain. In order to provide correct spiritual assistance to the Romanian refugees in Madrid (besides the asylum that had been put into operation in the summer of the previous year in Calle Homero no. 12, also through the contribution of the Romanian Catholic Mission), in early 1952 an Oriental rite chapel was opened in the Spanish capital. On behalf of the Catholic Mission, the Jesuit monks Amalio Orduña and Santiago Morillo,<sup>37</sup>

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ambassador of Francoist Spain to Turkey. Pedro de Prat y Soutzo promoted, in the early 1950s, a right-wing religious movement, the United Active Christians, and in 1964 he tried to organise, with American help, an anti-communist Christian front, a „worldwide Christian movement.“ He published a series of conferences and articles on Balkan issues (for instance, *Boris III, Rey de los Búlgaros (1894–1943), conferencia del...*, Madrid 15 de junio de 1965, Madrid, [s.n.], 1965). See de Miguel 2012, 227–228; Scott 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Alberto Martín-Artajo (1905–1979), Foreign Minister of Francoist Spain in 1945–57, was not among the supporters of the Spanish Phalanx, being a monarchist and the leader of a powerful Catholic movement during the time of Franco's government (who appointed him as head of the Catholic Action in 1940). His appointment as minister must be related precisely to the position of *el Generalísimo*, at the time of the defeat of the Reich, who wished to present an image of the Spanish government as Catholic and right-wing to the world. He directly contributed to the signing of the Concordat with Spain in August 1953 and the Madrid bilateral pact with the United States on September 23, 1953.

<sup>37</sup> Fr. Santiago Morillo Triviño, born in Benquerencia from Serena (Badajoz) in 1900, joined the Company of Jesus in 1918 and was ordained a priest in 1931, tying his destiny to Granada, Ecuador and Barcelona. He was sent to Valkenburg in the Netherlands, then to the Pontifical Oriental Seminary in Dubno, in Polish Ukraine. On February 2, 1936, he submitted the Oriental-rite profession of faith, converting from the Latin rite to the Byzantine one, celebrating his first religious services in the Oriental rite in Old Slavonic. A good connoisseur of Latin, Portuguese, French, Italian, English, German, Polish and various Slavic languages, he was the author of the work *Las Iglesias* 1946 and director of the magazine „Oriente Cristiano.“ He passed away in Madrid in 1966. See <http://hermandadsantoentierroguadalcanal.blogspot.com/2010/06/estancia-en-guadalcanal-de-un-famoso.html> (4 October 2019).

as well as the Greek-Catholic priest Alexandru Mircea, offered religious guidance to the Romanian community and organised the Byzantine rite chapel there.

Regarding the spiritual guidance of the refugees from behind the Iron Curtain who settled in Madrid after World War II, it should be noted that at the beginning of 1962, in the context of the ecumenical spirit promoted by the Second Vatican Council, a chapel of Byzantine rite through Obra del Oriente Cristiano, was opened in the capital of Spain, led by Fr. Santiago Murillo, S.J., assisted by Fr. Francisco Aguirre, who had specialised knowledge of the Oriental rite. The chapel, which is located on the Calle de Claudio Coello no. 129, near the Church of Sagrado Corazón and San Francisco de Borja of the Jesuits, was quite large (25 m" wide) and was dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God (corresponding to the Catholic Assunzione della Nostra Signora/Asunción de Nuestra Señora). It benefited from the whole architectural layout needed for the celebration of the Oriental liturgy (it was divided into two by the iconostasis and had the three altars in the sanctuary – that of the sacrifice and the *prothesis* and *diakonikon* annexes), hosting the celebration of the religious service of Oriental rite every day, from 9 a.m. to noon, and on Sundays at 11 a.m. and at noon. Its opening represented further evidence of the Holy See's interest in a unifying and pacifying work that would draw together the two ends and frontiers of Europe.<sup>38</sup>

#### ANNEX<sup>39</sup>

Ministero degli Affari Esteri  
A.P. VII

RISERVATO

TELESPRESSO n. 14/2487  
Indirizzato a  
AMBASCIATA WASHINGTON  
LEGAZIONE BUCAREST  
SERVIZIO ORGANIZZAZIONE  
ATLANTICA – SEDE  
DIREZIONE GENERALE AFFARI  
POLITICI II

Roma, addì 18 FEB. 1952

Oggetto: Missione di Mons. John C. KIRK.

Riferimento

REGISTRATO 19 FEB 952 AFF. POL. II

Sull'argomento in oggetto l'Ambasciata a Madrid ha, in data 7 corr. riferito quanto si trascrive, qui di seguito, per opportuna conoscenza:

“Accompagnato dall'ex Ministro Dimitrescu, é venuto a vedermi Mons. John C. Kirk, ex Segretario della Nunziatura di Bucarest che qui si presenta – come risulta dalla carta da visita – quale «Direttore della Missione cattolica rumena in Spagna. Nominato dalla Santa Sede». Egli mi ha detto che si propone di svolgere un'opera

<sup>38</sup> *Rito bizantino* 1962, pp. 26–36.

<sup>39</sup> The document is preserved in the Historical-Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, the fund Affari Politici, Ufficio IV, Romania 1950–1957, pacco 1122.

di assistenza religiosa, culturale ed anche materiale a favore dei rifugiati rumeni, con speciale cura per la gioventù che subisce in Romania un'azione gravemente disgregatrice da parte degli organi comunisti. Ha aggiunto che la sua attività avrà come centro la Spagna, il cui Governo gli ha assicurato il suo appoggio, ma abbraccerà tutti i Paesi dell'Europa occidentale ove si trovino rumeni, siano essi Uniati o scismatici e, oltre ai fini assistenziali sopradescritti – per i quali conta sull'aiuto finanziario americano – si propone un'opera pacificatrice ed unificatrice fra le varie tendenze politiche in cui le colonie rumene sono divise.

A proposito delle dichiarazioni – invero troppo Francoiste per un prelado investito di una missione del Vaticano – da lui fatte alla stampa dopo l'udienza concessagli dal Generale Franco, Mons. Kirk ha tenuto a precisarmi che non ne aveva dato previa conoscenza a questa Nunziatura: egli le ha poi commentate dicendo essere ormai giunto il momento di dire chiaramente la verità sui comunisti e sugli anticomunisti.

Mons. Kirk ha concluso dicendomi che si ripromette di tenere contatti con questa Ambasciata.

Per la comprensione degli scopi di questa missione che si presenta, per lo meno formalmente, in maniera alquanto anomala, occorre a mio avviso considerarla in funzione dell'atteggiamento che il Governo spagnolo, come é stato già riferito, é venuto assumendo nei confronti dei Paesi oltre cortina.

Sono noti a codesto onorevole Ministero lo «status» che questo Governo accorda alle ex Rappresentanze diplomatiche di tali Paesi, le accoglienze riservate ai Reali di Bulgaria, gli onori resi all'Arciduca Ottone in occasione del suo matrimonio e numerose altre manifestazioni del genere che si riassumono nell'azione discreta che svolge il Ministero degli Affari Esteri spagnolo attraverso il Ministro Prat al tempo stesso direttore degli affari d'America ed esperto di questioni balcaniche.

Ma v'è di più: come si ricorderà, nel suo articolo di Capo d'anno, il Ministro degli Affari Esteri Signor Martin Artajo é arrivato a criticare il sistema atlantico per il suo contenuto difensivo, mentre la Cristianità dovrebbe, secondo il pensiero spagnolo, orientarsi in senso attivo verso la liberazione dei Paesi oppressi dai sovietici.

Commentando tale articolo, un alto funzionario del Ministero degli Affari Esteri mi diceva che l'allusione alla liberazione dei popoli al di là della cortina non era stata dal Ministro Artajo concordata previamente con gli ambienti interessati ma rappresentava uno spontaneo movimento del suo spirito. Il funzionario aggiungeva però che l'articolo aveva avuto grandissima ripercussione in tutti i circoli di rifugiati mentre la propaganda americana, attraverso la sua stazione di Monaco, le aveva dato la più ampia diffusione al di là della cortina di ferro.

Evidentemente la Spagna, che non ha interessi e nemmeno rappresentanti diplomatici nei Paesi satelliti, si può permettere a buon mercato questi atteggiamenti oltranzisti che, oltre a rispondere al lato donchisciottesco dell'anima spagnola, fanno in questo momento particolarmente comodo nei riguardi degli Stati Uniti.

In relazione con la Missione Kirk segnalo che in questi giorni è stata aperta al culto in Madrid una cappella di rito orientale.”

indecipherable signatures

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